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How Finland's Consulate General in New York Helps Finnish Companies to Expand to the U.S.

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Abstract
This thesis investigates the role of the Finnish Consulate General in New York in supporting Finnish businesses seeking to expand into the U.S. market, examining the relevance of cultural theories in contemporary business contexts and exploring how cultural differences influence daily operations and business success. The study focuses on the consulate's efforts in facilitating high-level meetings, networking opportunities, and providing strategic guidance to Finnish companies. The study uses qualitative research methods, including a review of the SelectUSA Investment Summit, a comparative analysis of Finland and the U.S. using cultural theories, and a written questionnaire completed by key consulate officials.

The findings reveal that the consulate plays a crucial role in building connections, offering visibility, and aiding companies in understanding and navigating the U.S. market. The research also highlights the enduring relevance of cultural theories, though it notes their limitations in fully explaining the nuanced challenges Finnish companies face. Practical adaptability and cultural intelligence are identified as key factors for success.

Conclusions suggest that while cultural theories provide a foundational understanding, success in the U.S. market requires a more nuanced approach involving local networking, storytelling, and adaptability. The study also emphasises the importance of continuous consulate support in fostering successful business transactions. Further research could explore the long-term impact of these consulate activities on the sustained growth of Finnish businesses in the U.S.

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1 Introduction

The United States is the largest national economy and the world's largest trader despite the fact that Americans produce and get more than 20% of global income while making up less than 5% of the global population (United States Trade Representative 2024). The United States is the most important market and economic region in the world, accounting for more than half of global innovation. Owing to these reasons, Finland considers it vital to maintain strong economic and commercial ties with the United States. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

The United States, with its $25 trillion GDP and 335 million citizens, has the world's largest advanced economy consumer market. At about one-third of global household consumption, household spending is the greatest in the world. (International Trade Administration 2024.)

Due to its position, the Finnish Consulate General in New York concentrates most of its efforts on the city, which is recognised as a major hub for media, culture, and the economy on a global scale (Finland Abroad 2024).

For a Finnish company, the most natural official partner abroad is a Finnish actor. Although the businesses themselves bear the primary responsibility for exports and globalisation, diplomatic missions actively promote Finnish enterprises' exports. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2024.)

The purpose of this thesis is to get acquainted with the working methods of the general consulate of Finland in New York and evaluate how it helps Finnish companies wishing to expand to the U.S. markets. The first research question is how the consulate helps Finnish businesses to expand to the U.S. market. The second research question considers if three cultural theories: Hofstede’s, Edward T. Hall’s & Trompenaard’s, are still relevant in today’s business world, and if these theories explain the successes or challenges that Finnish companies face when doing business in the U.S. The third and final research question is: do cultural differences manifest in the daily work of the consulate, or are there other concepts or explanatory factors that can be identified which

support the success of business transactions? To answer these research questions, the study uses qualitative research methods, collecting and analysing both primary and secondary data in the forms of a questionnaire in addition to academic and governmental publications.

This report will benefit Finnish businesses considering expansion into the U.S. market, individuals interested in understanding how Finland's New York consulate supports Finnish companies in the process, and those curious about the cultural differences between Finland and the United States and how the differences affect co-operation between the Finnish consulate and the U.S.

The thesis begins with an introduction, followed by a detailed knowledge base outlining the consulate's duties. It then delves into cultural intelligence and key cultural theories, including Hofstede's, Hall's, and Trompenaars' models, which provide the framework for comparing Finnish and American cultures. The methodology section describes the research approach, including the use of questionnaires to gather insights on cultural differences and adaptation. The thesis concludes with a detailed analysis of the findings and their implications, supported by comprehensive references. The theoretical framework consists of the consulate's responsibilities, the already mentioned cultural theories, and cultural intelligence, each addressed in dedicated chapters.

2 Responsibilities of the Consulate General of Finland in New York

The Consulate General fosters relationships between U.S. and Finnish agents at the state and local levels, enabling interactions between representatives of the business, political, and economic domains. Furthermore, the Consulate General takes part in the initiatives to draw investors to Finland and backs the activities of Finnish businesses operating in the United States. While there is now a lot of work being done on startups and small enterprises, the Consulate General still works with companies in the established industry. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

The Consulate General of Finland provides a range of services to agents working in the cultural and creative fields in New York and other states that fall under its umbrella. The foundation of the Consulate General's operating model is the promotion of the Finnish agents' visibility, mobility, operational needs, and business potential in the United States through collaboration with local partners. The Consulate General's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, locating and facilitating possible cooperative alliances, providing networking opportunities, arranging expert visits, organising events, communicating, and offering general consultancy services. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

In collaboration with regional partners, the Consulate General has been successful in raising awareness of Finland's technological and innovative competence, culture, and equal, ecologically conscious way of thinking as well as its top-notch educational system. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

The Finnish Consulate General in Los Angeles, the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C., and other members of the Team Finland USA network work closely together with the Consulate General of Finland. Working with Business Finland and the Finnish-American Chamber of Commerce (FACC) is necessary when it comes to commercial and economic problems. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

3 Cultural Theories

3.1 Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory is a framework designed to understand how the values and behaviours in the workplace are shaped by culture. Developed by Geert Hofstede, it identifies six key cultural dimensions that influence how people from different societies interact in professional settings. The theory helps explain variations in workplace behaviours based on national culture. (Wale 2024.)

The first dimension, power distance, explores how a society handles inequalities in power. A high power distance index indicates that a society respects rank and authority, tolerates hierarchical institutions, and appreciates bureaucracy. A low power distance index, on the other hand, indicates a preference for more equitable power distribution, participative management, decentralised decision-making, and flatter organisational structures. (Wale 2024.)

The second dimension, individualism vs. collectivism, addresses the extent to which individuals prioritise personal goals over group objectives. In individualistic civilisations, the needs of oneself and one's immediate family are prioritised, along with personal accomplishment and individual rights. On the other hand, collectivist societies give more weight to the objectives and welfare of the group. These societies have a "we" mindset that shapes self-identity, and people there value loyalty and relationships more than people in individualistic cultures. (Wale 2024.)

Hofstede's third dimension, masculinity vs. femininity, highlights the role of gender-based emotional norms. The traits of masculinity include clear gender roles, a respect for assertiveness, bravery, strength, and competition. Modesty, nurturing, care for the quality of life, and flexibility in gender roles are all traits associated with femininity. (Wale 2024.)

The fourth dimension, uncertainty avoidance, deals with how cultures manage the uncertainty of the future. A high uncertainty avoidance index denotes a low risk-taking, uncertainty, and ambiguity tolerance. In these cultures, strict laws, rules, and other similar measures are used by both individuals and institutions to try to eliminate uncertainty. High ambiguity and uncertainty tolerance is indicated by a low uncertainty avoidance index. There are less laws, regulations, and other restrictions, and the unknown is more widely accepted. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures and individuals welcome and are comfortable in unstructured or changing circumstances. (Wale 2024.)

The fifth dimension is long-term vs. short-term orientation, which measures how much emphasis a society places on future rewards versus immediate results. Long-term-focused societies prioritise long-term accomplishments over short-term success, and they place a high value on values like perseverance, fortitude, thrift, savings, steady growth, and flexibility. Short-term orientation is characterised by a focus on the immediate future, delivering short-term success or enjoyment, and prioritizing the present over the future. (Wale 2024.)

Lastly, the indulgence vs. restraint dimension describes how much a society allows for the free gratification of desires. Indulgence is a sign that society allows people to enjoy life and have pleasure with relatively little restriction. When society suppresses needs and regulates them by social norms, it is demonstrating restraint. (Wale 2024.)

This theory is widely used in business to understand cross-cultural differences, enabling companies to navigate international management challenges more effectively. Understanding these dimensions can improve communication, management, and collaboration across cultural boundaries. (Wale 2024.)

3.2 Edward T. Hall’s Cultural Dimensions

The anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1976) divides societies into high and low context groups based on how much meaning is derived from the circumstances or language being used.

In low-context communication, verbal communication gets emphasised. Words are used to encode information so that it should roughly match what is intended. In general, verbal and nonverbal communication do not contradict each other very often. Anger and grief, for example, are visible emotions that can be expressed vocally. (Salo-Lee 2006.)

In high-context communication, only a part of information is expressed verbally. A significant amount of a message is "read" from the context, which includes the individual, his look, and nonverbal cues, past experiences, the context of

communication, and the interaction process. Metamessages are a common term for these types of messages. Metamessages are deciphered through specific clues that have cultural significance. A smile, for instance, is a signpost for interactional interpretation. A grin can indicate contentment or well-being in many cultural contexts. However, in other cultures—like China and Japan—it can also be used to convey humiliation or even hate. Different perceptions of these contextual cues may give rise to miscommunications between cultures. (Salo-Lee 2006.)

3.3 Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions Model

According to Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner's Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business, there are notable cultural differences among nations, and these differences affect how organisations and enterprises are run. In this context, culture is defined as "the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 6).

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, each culture distinguishes itself from others by the distinctive approaches it employs to address certain challenges that unavoidably occur. These problems can be generally divided into three categories: those that arise from relationships with other people, those that are brought on by time, and those that have to do with the environment. They say that they can identify seven fundamental aspects of culture from the strategies that other cultures have used to address these universal issues. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 8.)

The following are the seven fundamental aspects of Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions Model.

The concepts of particularism and universalism represent two contrasting perspectives. A rough definition of the universalist perspective is: "What is good and right can be defined and always applies." Particularist cultures give much more weight to the obligations of specific circumstances and relationships with

others. For instance, instead of assuming that the one good approach must always be followed, the particularist rationale is that friendship has special obligations and so may therefore come first. Abstract social codes receive less focus. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 8.)

The concepts of communitarianism and individualism reflect different ways people perceive their roles within society. Do people see themselves more as members of a group than as individuals? In addition, is it more crucial to put the needs of the community first because it is something that many people share, or is it more crucial to concentrate on the individual so that they can give to the community as and when they choose? (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 8-9.)

The concepts of neutrality and emotional expression highlight differing cultural views on appropriate communication styles. Is it appropriate for us to communicate in an objective, dispassionate manner, or is it okay to show emotion? Business interactions in North America and Northwest Europe are usually instrumental and focused on accomplishing goals. It is assumed that in order for us to operate our machines more effectively, we should look like them. However, in many other cultures, business is a human concern that encompasses the complete spectrum of emotions deemed appropriate. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 9.)

The concepts of specificity and diffuseness refer to different approaches to business relationships. When a person is fully involved in a commercial engagement there is a real and personal interaction, instead of the specific relationship stated by a contract. A diffuse relationship is not only preferable but also required in many countries before business may continue. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 9.)

The distinction between achievement and ascription highlights different bases for evaluating individuals. Achievement implies that an evaluation is based on past performance as well as present accomplishments. Ascription refers to the assignment of a status to an individual based on various factors such as birth,

kinship, gender, age, connections, and educational background. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 9.)

4 Cultural Intelligence

The ability to adapt to new situations and fit in is known as cultural intelligence, or CQ. The cognitive, the physical, and the emotional/motivational are its three constituent parts. Despite having several traits in common with emotional intelligence, CQ goes one step further by allowing a person to distinguish between behaviours that are culturally specific and behaviours that are universal. (Earlay & Mosakowski 2004.)

Given that CQ is the ability to comprehend, adjust, and function well in a variety of cultural contexts, it transcends simple cultural understanding by emphasizing how people function in culturally diverse settings. Cultural intelligence includes the ability to recognize cultural differences, modify behavior, and make judgments that take cultural nuances into account, all of which are essential for successful cooperation in globalized environments. (Oxford Review 2024.)

This section explains the three different parts of cultural intelligence. The cognitive aspect includes the fact that understanding cultures involves developing strategies to recognise shared values and behaviours. This requires observing clues and making interpretations rather than relying on rigid learning of cultural norms. An example would be a Canadian engineer working in Japan and observing how his Japanese colleagues handle disagreements by subtly signalling concerns rather than speaking directly. Over time, he adapts by interpreting these subtle clues to better navigate workplace dynamics. (Earlay & Mosakowski 2004.)

The physical aspect tells that it is important to physically adapt to cultural customs, such as gestures and mannerisms, to show respect and inclusion in the culture. An example of this would be an American manager in India adopts the local custom of exchanging business cards with both hands, showing

respect and earning trust, despite initially feeling awkward. (Earlay & Mosakowski 2004.)

The emotional and/or motivational aspect states that confidence and perseverance are key. Belief in one's ability to adapt and overcome setbacks helps in successfully navigating unfamiliar cultural environments. An example of this would be a Turkish entrepreneur facing repeated rejections while pitching to investors in Germany but remaining persistent, using each failure to refine her approach until she secures funding. (Earlay & Mosakowski 2004.)

For a variety of reasons, CQ is becoming more and more important in a world where everything is connected. Companies that operate globally must communicate with clients, partners, and coworkers from other countries, and this necessitates interaction between leaders and staff. In multicultural settings, having a high CQ can help with teamwork, negotiation, and management. Societies are growing increasingly varied in terms of culture as migration increases. CQ fosters social peace and cohesiveness by assisting people in integrating and interacting productively in such different environments. (Thomas & Peterson 2017.)

Everyone can develop their cultural intelligence through a range of proven strategies. Coaching and training programs are useful for enhancing CQ, but they cannot replace direct, hands-on experience. The most effective way to build CQ is through on-the-job training. Ideal experiences involve full immersion in a different cultural setting, without the familiar comforts of home. (Livermore & Van Dyne 2015.)

5 Methodology choices of the thesis

Qualitative data explains attributes or traits. It is often presented in narrative form and is gathered through surveys, interviews, or observation. (Macalester College 2024.)

This study employs a multi-method approach to examine the role of the Finnish Consulate in New York, the cultural dynamics between Finland and the United States, and the challenges faced by Finnish businesses entering the U.S. market. The methods utilised include a case study, a country comparison based on cultural theories, and a written questionnaire with consulate officials.

The first method is a case study. This involved observing a significant event participated by the Finnish Consulate. This event was analysed to understand how it supports the consulate's mission of assisting Finnish businesses in entering the U.S. market. By examining how the event facilitated networking, visibility, and strategic opportunities for participating companies, the case study provided insights into the practical role of the consulate in fulfilling its objectives.

The second method uses secondary data to conduct a comparative analysis of Finland and the United States, based on three cultural theories: Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Trompenaars' cultural frameworks, and Hall's high- and low-context communication theory. This analysis explores cultural differences and their relevance in contemporary business practices. Academic literature, cultural analysis tools, and reports were used as data sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The aim was to investigate whether cultural factors remain significant in shaping cross-cultural business interactions.

The third method involved written questionnaires with two key officials from the Finnish General Consulate in New York. These participants were selected due to their expertise and direct involvement in Finnish-U.S. business relations. The questionnaires sought to gain practical insights into the consulate's strategies, the challenges faced by Finnish companies, and the role of cultural differences in the market entry process. The responses were analysed by identifying recurring patterns and drawing connections between theoretical frameworks and real-world applications.

The construction of the thesis questionnaire was designed to gather comprehensive insights into the role of the Finnish Consulate in supporting

Finnish businesses entering the U.S. market, the relevance of cultural theories in contemporary business, and the impact of cultural differences on daily operations and business success. The questionnaire was developed to elicit qualitative data, focusing on key themes such as the consulate's services, cultural intelligence, and the practical application of cultural theories.

Questions were crafted to be open-ended, allowing respondents to provide detailed and nuanced responses based on their personal experiences and professional roles. The questionnaire was distributed to two members of the Consulate Generals Economic and Cultural Affairs and Communications unit, Lotta Jessen, Special Adviser for Economic and Commercial Affairs and Elina Räsänen, Commercial Counsellor. These individuals were selected due to their extensive interaction with Finnish and American firms, making them well-positioned to provide valuable insights. By focusing on the two experts, the research ensured that the data collected was directly informed by those most engaged in the consulate's economic and commercial activities.

The full questionnaire is available in the appendices.

6 SelectUSA Investment Summit

The SelectUSA Investment Summit is the most prominent corporate investment facilitation event in the US, bringing together thousands of companies, investors, economic development organisations (EDOs), and industry experts to negotiate deals (International Trade Administration 2024).

The U.S. Department of Commerce is the host of the Investment Summit, which offers EDOs the chance to meet with foreign businesses in person and close investment transactions. It is a one-stop shop for businesses thinking about growing in the United States. (International Trade Administration 2024.)

At the June SelectUSA Investment Summit in Washington, DC, ten Finnish companies made up a delegation that attended this premier event aimed at

promoting foreign investments in the US. The summit was attended by nearly 5000 people, including state representatives, government officials, and prominent figures from the global business community. The US Embassy in Finland, the Consulate General of Finland in New York, the Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC, and Business Finland funded the largest-ever delegation from Finland. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

The delegation, led by U.S. Ambassador to Finland Douglas Hickey, included ten pioneering Finnish companies specialising in technology and, in particular, the cleantech sector. Ambassador Hickey's participation in the event, specifically to support Finnish companies, facilitated the organisation of several high-level meetings, including with state governors and, for one company, even the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The Consulate General in New York, Business Finland, and Business Tampere participated in broader discussions and assisted in arranging bilateral meetings in various configurations. Representing the Consulate General were the Deputy Consul General Keijo Karjalainen and the Commercial Advisor Lotta Jessen. The Finnish delegation was welcomed by the Deputy Chief of Mission, Marjut Akola, and the Head of the Economic Relations Team, Christian Heikkinen at the Finnish embassy in Washington. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

The Finnish delegation included carefully selected companies ready to invest. The Finnish companies participating in the event were Biomendex, Bluefors, Hycamite, IQM Quantum Computers, Kempower, Neste, Nokia, Onego Bio, Oura, and VILPE. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

The feedback from the companies has been very positive, and their representatives had numerous meetings throughout all four days. Tuomas Saikkonen, CEO of VILPE, a mid-sized company in the construction industry, stated that the event was valuable for them and recommended it to other companies of similar size. Meanwhile, Jouni Flyktman, Vice President of Defence & Security at IQM Quantum Computers, a quantum computer manufacturer, noted that the summit was an excellent opportunity to develop

the expertise and networks needed to expand into the U.S. market. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

SelectUSA and its annual investment event provide companies seeking to expand with networking opportunities, federal financing sources, and the knowledge necessary to function in the market. According to estimates from the U.S. Embassy in Finland, the Finnish companies in attendance are expected to invest more than $1 billion in the United States in the upcoming years. In addition to Team Finland's extra work, it would be helpful to promote the event in Finland. The Consulate General in New York has already used the good comments from Finnish businesses over the event's success in its own communications. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

The event offers unmatched networking opportunities with other businesses and regional and state-level economic development organisations—as long as one takes use of them. Meetings with state senators and governors can even be scheduled ahead of time, and the Washington Embassy's political connections can be used during the event. It may also be possible to have discussions on Capitol Hill for sufficiently substantial investments. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

Hickey's presence facilitated numerous meetings and enhanced their significance. This approach is worth utilising in the future whenever possible. Companies were given the opportunity to meet before the trip, and a follow-up feedback discussion will be held in September 2024. Additionally, during the event, the Finnish embassy in Washington organised a roundtable discussion for Finnish companies and the delegation from the embassy in Helsinki. This provided Finnish companies with an opportunity to exchange ideas in a confidential setting. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

The next SelectUSA Investment Summit will be held May 11–14, 2025. With this in mind, it is crucial to strengthen collaboration between Finland’s U.S. missions, the U.S. Embassy in Finland, and Business Finland during its transitional phase. Special emphasis should be placed on the joint preparation and presence of the Embassy in Washington and the Consulate General in New

York in the coming years. The role of the American embassy in Helsinki was historically significant this year, as Ambassador Hickey personally participated in several company meetings with state political representatives. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

The parties included in the Finnish delegation were happy and felt that the summit was of great value. Jouni Flyktman, the Vice President of IQM Quantum Computers said, “The United States is an important market for us, and we are expanding here. SelectUSA Investment Summit is an excellent opportunity to build the expertise and network needed for the expansion.”. Additionally, Vilpe’s CEO, Tuomas Saikkonen, said the event was a “Fantastic summit, very high value for us”. (Consulate General of Finland in New York 2024.)

The conference gave the Finnish companies a great opportunity to network and gain knowledge about US market entry tactics, state-level capabilities, and federal financing prospects. High-level talks with senators, governors, businessmen, and organisations promoting economic development were part of the event. (Finland Abroad 2024.)

Because of the enormous potential for networking, advisory services, and funding opportunities, the U.S. Team Finland network should place even more emphasis on attending the yearly event, and Finnish enterprises should utilise SelectUSA's services throughout the year. (Jessen & Haverinen 2024.)

7 Comparing Finland and USA

This part discusses the key differences between Finnish and American cultures through three key cultural frameworks: Hofstede’s, Edward T. Hall’s, and Trompenaars's cultural dimensions.

7.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Finland's social and cultural factors qualities can be analysed using Hofstede's cultural dimensions to identify numerous unique features. First off, Finland's low power distance is indicative of a society that devalues hierarchy and favours equality, especially in the workplace. Individuals expect to be treated equally, regardless of their standing in society or within an organisation. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

Finland has a high individualism score as well, emphasising personal independence and autonomy. However, Finland strikes a balance between this and strong social welfare programs that promote communal well-being, in contrast to more extreme individualistic countries like the USA. People may rely on public systems for healthcare, education, and other social services because there is a shared appreciation of the importance of community support, even while individual freedom and responsibility are also significant. This fosters a culture in which people enjoy their freedoms while being well-supported by robust state infrastructures. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

Finland has a low score on the masculinity vs. femininity dimension, indicating that its culture is predominately feminine. In actuality, this means that cooperation, modesty, and quality of life are valued more highly than competition and financial gain. Finland's social policies and general societal views reflect the country's values of work-life balance, gender equality, and generosity. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

When it comes to uncertainty avoidance, Finland scores relatively high, which indicates a preference for rules, structure, and avoiding uncertainty. Finns appreciate stability and methodical methods to risk management, and they generally feel better at ease in situations where the future is predictable. They also enjoy making extensive plans ahead of time. Finland has well-organised systems for social welfare, governance, and education, which demonstrate this trait. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

A long-term orientation is also evident in Finland, which values perseverance, frugal living, and forward-thinking thinking. A strong focus on education, environmental preservation, and well-thought-out economic policies are characteristics of the long-term success and sustainability of the Finnish worldview. Frugal, patient, and future-focused, Finnish culture is flexible to changing conditions. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

Lastly, Finland exhibits a reasonably moderate balance when it comes to indulgence. Life, leisure, and personal pleasures are to be enjoyed, but moderation and conformity to social norms are also important. In Finland, people are encouraged to enjoy life to the fullest while upholding a sense of modesty and respect for societal values. Both freedom of speech and responsible behaviour are highly valued. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

American culture has some unique characteristics when analysed through the lens of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. First, the United States has a relatively small power distance, which reflects a desire for equality and a belief that leaders should be reachable. Americans have a tendency to question hierarchical structures and authorities. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

One of the world's most individualistic civilisations is that of the United States. Individual accomplishments, independence, and personal freedom are prioritised. Individual rights frequently take precedence over the interests of groups or society at large, and people are expected to take responsibility for their own achievements. The entrepreneurial mentality that permeates the entire nation is evidence that the culture values individual initiative. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

The United States tends to have a more masculine culture than feminine. This indicates that success, performance, and rivalry are highly regarded, particularly when quantified in monetary or material terms. American culture often encourages ambition, assertiveness, and the pursuit of personal goals. Success is often linked to material wealth and career progression. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

The United States has a low uncertainty avoidance score, indicating that most people in the country are at ease with risk, uncertainty, and change. The nation's inventiveness and spirit of entrepreneurship are encouraged by this receptivity to new concepts and ideas. Americans frequently welcome new challenges and are not afraid to take chances in order to succeed. This cultural characteristic also shows up in a dynamic and adaptable attitude to problem-solving and business. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

The United States has a tendency to be more short-term oriented than long-term oriented. This indicates that Americans are less concerned with long-term planning or endurance and more focused on instant outcomes and success. The emphasis on short-term company goals or quarterly financial results, as well as the fast-paced work culture, all contribute to the sense of urgency to produce quick results. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

The United States also is a highly indulgent society, meaning it encourages personal fulfilment, leisure, and freedom of speech. Individual happiness and well-being are highly valued in America, and there is a strong desire to enjoy life and achieve one's desires. The culture's emphasis on personal fulfilment, the entertainment industry, and materialism all demonstrate this. (The Culture Factor 2024.)

Using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions to compare the United States and Finland reveals a number of key cultural distinctions that affect the social, professional, and decision-making practices of both nations.

Because they both have low power distances, equality is valued, and less hierarchical structures are preferred. However, Finland is even more inclined toward flat organisational systems, in which there is less differentiation between levels and open communication between subordinates and superiors. Even though American hierarchy is likewise somewhat flat, leadership and authority are nevertheless highly valued, particularly in business environments. Although

Americans feel at ease challenging authority, they still look to leaders to provide direction.

The United States has one of the highest individualism scores in the world, with a strong emphasis on individual liberty, self-governance, and independence. In American culture, people are supposed to put their own objectives first and accomplishment on a personal level is usually used to determine success. Finland scores highly on individualism as well, although to a lower degree. Finns have a deeper feeling of social duty even if they cherish individual rights and freedom. Finland's comprehensive social welfare system, which encourages a balance between individual freedom and social support, complements its individualistic culture. This fosters a more collective perspective on community welfare and public services.

The distinction is especially noticeable in this case. The United States tends to be a more masculine society, emphasising success, competition, and material gain. Ambition and assertiveness are highly valued in American culture, and competition for success—which is generally equated with professional and financial achievements—is commonly promoted. Finland, on the other hand, has a low score in this area, indicating that its society leans heavily feminine. In Finnish culture, collaboration, modesty, and living well are valued above competition. In Finland, taking care of others, gender equality, and work-life balance are all very important. This indicates that Finns are more likely to prioritise social harmony and well-being than Americans, who could be more focused on "winning" or outperforming others.

Finns show a stronger tendency for avoiding ambiguity and uncertainty, as seen by their higher uncertainty avoidance score compared to Americans. In Finland, people tend to value meticulous planning, organised surroundings, and defined norms. Finland offers well-organised social structures, education, and administration that all reflect this cultural inclination. In contrast, Americans are generally more at ease with ambiguity and taking risks, as evidenced by their lower score on the uncertainty avoidance scale. The nation's dynamic and entrepreneurial mentality, which places a high priority on invention and

adaptation, reflects this. Americans are more open to change and are more inclined to take chances in both personal and professional endeavours.

The United States is more short-term focused, emphasising swift accomplishments and outcomes. Whether in business, technology, or politics, this short-term concentration is frequently mirrored in the fast-paced work environment and the demand for efficiency and instant results. For instance, American businesses frequently place a high priority on quarterly financial success. Finland, on the other hand, has a long-term orientation that emphasises sustainability, incremental advancement, and future benefits. Long-term planning, education, and environmental sustainability are valued highly in Finnish society. Finns are more patient people who prefer gradual progress and tenacity above rapid results.

Both American and Finnish societies place a high importance on leisure and enjoying life, as evidenced by their high scores on indulgence. The United States, on the other hand, exhibits a greater capacity for indulgence due to its consumerist, pro-personal freedom, and happiness-seeking culture. Enjoying life and achieving personal goals are highly valued in America, as evidenced by the country's thriving entertainment sector and consumer culture. Although in a more measured way, Finland also prioritises personal fulfilment and leisure time. A balanced lifestyle is encouraged by Finnish culture, which combines enjoyment of oneself with moderation, modesty, and respect for social mores.

In conclusion, while having similar cultural characteristics like individualism and minimal power distance, the United States and Finland treat competition, uncertainty, time orientation, and indulgence quite differently. Finland prioritises cooperation, long-term planning, and quality of life, whereas the United States places more emphasis on individual accomplishment, immediate achievement, and a competitive spirit. These cultural distinctions impact social behaviour, the workplace, and decision-making processes in every nation, impacting everything from social policies to business practices.

In 2021, Camille Walker (2021) conducted research on the distinctions between Finnish and American corporate cultures. A survey was completed by respondents from Finland and the United States. It contrasted the employees' responses with Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. The sample size of the questionnaire was 130 people and meant only for people with work experience in either Finland or the United States. (Walker 2021.)

For power distance, the answers of the participants asserted Hofstede's measuring of low power distance scores for both countries. A minimal power distance could be seen by the responses provided for employees who worked in Finland and the U.S., as most respondents selected responses indicating that they felt comfortable approaching their employer and voicing demands or concerns. Additionally, they can describe the relationship between all employees as equal and discuss personal matters among all employees in the workplace. (Walker 2021.)

In the individuality section, Finnish and American workers gave comparable answers, demonstrating a strong feeling of working independently and accomplishing objectives as individuals but yet highlighting the importance of teamwork. These results would challenge the notion that individualism is a little lower in both countries than Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions claims. (Walker 2021.)

Given that Finland tends to be more feminine, the responses to the masculinity part somewhat defy Hofstede's Cultural Dimension findings. However, it appears that their work motivation is fairly similar to that of the more macho United States. (Walker 2021.)

Although the level of uncertainty avoidance is about average; Finland has a little higher level than the US, according to the results of the section on uncertainty avoidance. (Walker 2021.)

The findings for the Long-Term Orientation section indicate that, contrary to Hofstede's views, the United States seems to have a more long-term orientation

viewpoint than Finland. According to both Finnish and American responses, the majority of their jobs involve talking about their companies' future objectives. In contrast to the United States, where firms are long-term focused, it appears that more respondents in Finland claimed that their organisations prepare for short-term goals. (Walker 2021.)

Hofstede's assertion that both nations exhibit high levels of indulgence is supported by the findings of the Indulgence section. A significant portion of respondents from both groups made impulsive purchases or bought items they desired because they were compensated, indicating a high degree of indulgence in their responses. (Walker 2021.)

7.2 Edward T. Hall’s Cultural Dimensions

Finland exhibits a double face in its communication style. In many ways, Finland appears to have had a high context culture, but this is slowly shifting, and the country is now perceived as having a lower context culture—at least when it comes to communication among the younger generation. (Nishimura, Nevgi & Tella 2008.)

Finnish communication culture has been characterised as being silent and rather monologic; it is marked by lengthy, slow-moving turns of speech, long pauses, and a distaste for being interrupted by vocal exclamations or applause (Nishimura et al. 2008). Is the quiet Finn real or a myth? According to Salo-Lee, it is likely that this myth, which although widely recognised among Finns, is already beginning to fade, even as a stereotype (Salo-Lee 2007).

Finland has a so-called high context culture, which requires learning to read between the lines. Finns, for instance, tend to be straightforward, honest, and problem-focused, which might make them appear rude or judgemental. The truth is that Finns tend to take for granted and keep quiet about what works. Humility and modesty are fundamental characteristics, and quietness is frequently regarded as a virtue. (Aalto University 2022.)

The United States on the other hand is a low-context country. People in these countries generally expect clear, direct communication and often prefer written confirmation over implied meaning (McIvor 2022). Evason (2022) defined communication as direct, honest, clear, and explicit (Evason 2022). An high-context culture places more trust on nonverbal communication than on verbal communication; more information is internalised by the individual or presented in a physical setting (Salo-Lee 2006).

So, while Finland is transitioning towards lower-context communication, particularly among younger generations, it remains more reliant on implicit understanding than the United States, where direct and unambiguous communication is the norm.

7.3 Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions Model

Firstly, the concept of universalism versus particularism highlights that people from U.S. tend to be more flexible and relationship-orientated compared to the average person in Finland. As a U.S. citizen doing business with a Finnish client, one will be interacting with individuals who are more likely to pay attention to and adhere to established regulations. Legal contracts are more likely to be thoroughly negotiated and rigorously followed. They are less likely to be swayed by the connection built with them and will not easily alter or revise contracts. They might have a more rigorous, disciplined, and stringent outlook on life, which could be difficult at first. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

When examining individualism versus communitarianism, Finland and the U.S. score highly, which means they are both strongly individualistic countries. Regarding this dimension of obligations to individuals and groups, Finns view the world similarly to Americans. The two countries have comparable moral compasses and discover that communication works with a great deal of empathy because Finland score similarly to the USA. Some caution is required regarding what constitutes group orientation. Is the "we" in question the immediate or extended family, or does it relate to the group of people working

together on the business endeavour and developing a strong sense of identity as a unit. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

For specific versus diffuse orientations, Finland and the U.S. are quite similar. Both countries are considered specific cultures, where people tend to separate personal and professional lives. They interact with people in multiple areas of life, but with clear boundaries between different aspects of their personalities. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

Regarding neutral versus affective orientations, the United States and Finland differ in emotional expressiveness. On average, Americans tend to display emotions more openly, while Finns exhibit a more moderate level of emotional expression. However, both cultures follow fairly similar approaches to showing or hiding emotions depending on the context. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

For sequential versus synchronic orientations, Finland and the United States both show a strong preference for handling tasks in a structured, step-by-step manner. Although people from Finland score with a greater orientation towards focusing on one thing at a time compared to the United States, in many respects, both cultures show a significant inclination towards sequential task handling. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

For achievement versus ascription, Finland and the United States share a similar emphasis on merit-based success. While Finns and Americans are comparable, differences may arise in what each culture perceives and values as accomplishments, influencing the way status is earned and recognized. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

Lastly, in the dimension of internal versus external control, notable differences exist between Finland and the United States. People from the U.S. have a greater orientation towards going with the flow. Finland's culture is seen as internally focused. Internal societies hold the view that direct effects on the environment are possible. To strengthen their negotiating position, a person

from the U.S. might seek conflict. When they are not in control, they usually feel uncomfortable. (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024.)

In conclusion, Finland and the United States have different approaches to relationships and rules. Americans are more flexible (particularism), whilst Finns follow the law rigidly (universalism). Both cultures exhibit considerable involvement in various facets of life and a strong sense of individualism (specific). Finns exhibit less emotional expressiveness (neutral) and a minor increase in task focus (sequential). Both emphasise success as a major factor in status, but Finns value environmental control (internal), while the U.S. prefer to "go with the flow" (external).

7.4 Conclusion of Theories

The cultural theories of Hofstede, Hall, and Trompenaars reveal distinct contrasts between Finland and the United States. Hofstede's framework highlights that while both countries share traits like individualism and minimal power distance, they diverge in their priorities. Finland values cooperation, long-term planning, and quality of life, whereas the U.S. emphasises competition, immediate achievement, and individual accomplishment. These differences shape not only social behaviours but also workplace practices and decision-making processes in both countries.

T. Hall's high-context versus low-context framework focuses on communication styles, showing that Finland relies more on implicit understanding, though it is gradually transitioning toward direct, low-context communication, particularly among younger generations. In contrast, the U.S. is a firmly low-context culture, where clear and direct communication is the norm. This difference underscores varying expectations for clarity and expression in interpersonal and professional interactions.

Trompenaars' dimensions further highlight these cultural contrasts. Finns tend to rigidly adhere to universal rules and laws (universalism), while Americans adopt a more flexible, situation-dependent approach (particularism). The U.S.

exhibit greater emotional expressiveness (affective) and prefer a syncronich approach to tasks, whereas Finns display more emotional restraint (neutral) and structured time management (sequential). Additionally, Americans emphasize environmental control (external), while Finns prefer to adapt to circumstances (internal). Despite these differences, both cultures share a strong sense of individualism and place high value on achievement as a measure of status.

While these theories provide valuable insights, they also have limitations. They tend to generalise and may overlook individual differences, generational shifts, and the impact of globalisation. For example, Finland’s gradual move toward a low-context communication style demonstrates that cultures are not static. Additionally, the theories may simplify the complexity of multicultural interactions, where cultural boundaries often blend.

Overall, the frameworks reveal how societal values influence behaviour, communication, and decision-making in both Finland and the U.S. Finland’s emphasis on cooperation and flexibility contrasts with the U.S.'s focus on competition and directness. These differences can present challenges in cross-cultural interactions but they also provide opportunities for learning and adaptation. Recognising the dynamic and nuanced nature of culture is essential for fostering collaboration, particularly in a globalised world.

8 Questionnaire

8.1 Answers from Questionnaire

8.1.1 Role of the Finnish consulate in supporting Finnish companies

The answers regarding the questionnaire’s questions on the subject of the role of the Finnish Consulate in supporting Finnish companies are as follows. Elina Räsänen (2024), serving as a commercial counselor at the Finnish Consulate for the last two years, describes the consulate's role as identifying market opportunities, promoting Finnish innovation and tech expertise, building private-

public partnerships, and assisting Finnish companies in networking and entering the U.S. market. The consulate also plays a role in attracting U.S. investors to Finland. Räsänen emphasises the importance of networking, fostering relationships, and building Finland's brand image through various events and connections with industry experts. (Räsänen 2024.)

The key factors she identifies for Finnish companies' success in the U.S. market include overcoming challenges such as lack of capital, poor market research, and adapting products to the U.S. market. Successful companies often hire U.S.-based CEOs, establish local subsidiaries, and build partner channels early on. As companies establish themselves, the consulate provides introductions to networks of lawyers, accountants, and other go-to-market experts. Success is measured not by numerical targets but by the extent of support provided to all companies, regardless of size or maturity. (Räsänen 2024.)

Lotta Jessen (2024), the special advisor in economic and commercial affairs with seven years at the consulate, describes a similar role, focusing on building connections between Finnish and U.S. agents at various levels, facilitating relationships in the political, economic, and corporate spheres. Jessen highlights the importance of networking, fostering relationships, and organising events to promote Finland's interests. Key factors for success include adequate resources, commitment, and the ability to adapt. Successful entry into the U.S. market requires thorough preparation, strategic network-building, and flexibility. Jessen underscores the importance of crafting a compelling narrative around products and being ready to evolve. Relocating Finnish leadership to the U.S. and building local marketing and sales teams are also crucial. The consulate's support evolves based on the company's needs, providing connections, opportunities, and visibility. Success is measured through feedback from companies and CRM data, focusing on new connections and opportunities created. (Jessen 2024.)

8.1.2 Cultural Differences Between Finland and the U.S.

Räsänen notes the U.S. business environment's fast pace and the importance of connections. She observes that Finnish companies must adapt their reserved and straightforward approach to succeed in the U.S., where being likeable, engaging in small talk, and understanding local manners are crucial. Räsänen has not received formal training on cultural differences but emphasises the importance of understanding U.S. nuances, such as hiring local talent for key roles. She believes Finnish companies should receive training in cultural differences to adapt effectively, as the U.S. values clear communication, storytelling, and networking. (Räsänen 2024.)

Jessen emphasises mastering the art of follow-up to match local expectations. Finns are seen as trustworthy and reliable, which is a strength in the U.S. market. Jessen has not received formal training but has gained cultural insights from personal experiences, such as living in the U.S. and being part of a Finnish-American family. The traits Jessen mentioned above, highlight significant cultural differences, including the U.S.'s focus on storytelling, networking, and a positive attitude towards failure. The advisor advocates for Finnish companies to be aware of these cultural differences and adapt, leveraging local knowledge while maintaining their unique characteristics. (Jessen 2024.)

8.1.3 Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Adaptation

Räsänen is familiar with the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) and considers it very important for Finnish companies expanding into the U.S. She believes the consulate demonstrates CQ by leading by example and providing guidance on local business culture. Räsänen strongly supports the idea that Finnish companies should receive training in CQ to navigate cultural differences effectively. (Räsänen 2024.)

Jessen, although not familiar with specific cultural theories, recognises the growing importance of cultural intelligence in a globalised business

environment. She stresses that business is ultimately about people, and understanding cultural nuances is crucial for success. She believes that CQ is becoming increasingly important as companies operate globally, advocating for Finnish companies to balance acting locally while upholding their values. (Jessen 2024.)

9 Results

9.1 How the consulate general helps finnish businesses expand to the US markets

Research question one explored how the Consulate General of Finland in New York helps Finnish businesses expand to the U.S. market. According to the theoretical framework, the consulate fosters relationships between U.S. and Finnish agents at state and local levels, enabling interactions across business, political, and economic domains (Finland Abroad 2024). This was clearly demonstrated at the SelectUSA event, where the consulate played a pivotal role in connecting Finnish companies with influential figures, such as state governors and even the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. These meetings provided opportunities to establish connections and foster partnerships, embodying the consulate's role as a bridge between Finnish businesses and the U.S. market.

The theoretical section highlights the consulate’s emphasis on networking opportunities, such as arranging events, facilitating expert visits, and offering consultancy services (Finland Abroad 2024). This was evident at the SelectUSA Investment Summit, where Finnish companies gained access to unparalleled networking opportunities. These included interactions with regional and state economic development organisations and other businesses, helping Finnish companies integrate into the U.S. market ecosystem (Jessen & Haverinen 2024).

The questionnaire responses further support this role. Elina Räsänen, a commercial counselor at the consulate, highlighted the importance of

networking and building relationships. She emphasised the consulate's efforts in organising events and fostering connections with industry experts, private-public partnerships, and potential collaborators (Räsänen 2024). Similarly, Lotta Jessen, a special advisor in economic and commercial affairs, reiterated the significance of networking and events in promoting Finland's interests in the U.S. market (Jessen 2024). Both respondents underscored the consulate's role in providing Finnish companies with critical connections and visibility, aligning with both the theory and observed practices at SelectUSA.

The consulate also collaborates with the Finnish Embassy in Washington and Business Finland to prepare companies for events, including organising discussions that refine market entry strategies (Finland Abroad 2024). This was reflected in practice at SelectUSA, where the consulate supported Finnish companies through preparatory activities such as roundtable discussions showcasing the consulate's dedication to ensuring businesses were well-equipped for success (Jessen & Haverinen 2024). The questionnaire answers reinforce this point, as both Räsänen and Jessen highlighted the importance of offering companies tailored guidance and preparation, ensuring that their strategies align with the unique challenges and opportunities of the U.S. market (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024).

Additionally, the theoretical part of the thesis further emphasises the consulate's role in promoting the visibility, mobility, and business potential of Finnish agents through partnerships with local entities (Finland Abroad 2024). At SelectUSA, the consulate actively promoted Finnish businesses, enhancing their credibility and appeal to U.S. partners and investors (Finland Abroad 2024). High-profile visibility at the event underscored the consulate's commitment to raising awareness of Finland's strengths, from technological innovation to sustainable practices.

The questionnaire responses confirmed the consulate's efforts in promoting Finnish companies at events like SelectUSA. Both interviewees noted the importance of crafting a compelling narrative for Finnish businesses and ensuring they are well-positioned to succeed. Räsänen highlighted the role of

visibility in attracting U.S. investors to Finland, while Jessen emphasised the value of adaptive strategies and local representation for long-term success. (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024).

Through these combined efforts, as outlined in both the theoretical framework and practical observations, the Finnish Consulate in New York acts as a vital bridge for Finnish companies seeking to establish themselves and succeed in the competitive U.S. market. The questionnaire answers further validate the critical contributions of the consulate, providing a richer and more detailed understanding of its role.

9.2 Are Cultural Theories Still Relevant?

The second research question asked if the three cultural theories are still relevant in today's business world, and if they explain the successes or challenges that Finnish companies face when doing business in the U.S. The theoretical frameworks of Hofstede, Hall, and Trompenaars provide valuable insights into cultural differences between Finland and the United States. These theories highlight key distinctions, such as Finland’s emphasis on cooperation, long-term planning, and quality of life versus the U.S.’s focus on competition, immediate results, and individual achievement (The Culture Factor 2024). Similarly, Hall’s framework illustrates Finland’s transition from high-context communication to a more direct, low-context style (Nishimura, Nevgi & Tella 2008), while Trompenaars’ dimensions show contrasts in emotional expression, task orientation, and attitudes toward rules (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting 2024).

Despite the insights these theories provide, they cannot fully explain the successes or challenges Finnish companies face in the U.S. This is largely because the theories generalise cultural traits and do not account for the practical, real-world challenges businesses encounter. Jessen and Räsänen’s insights underline the importance of factors like adaptability, storytelling, and networking, which extend beyond the scope of traditional cultural frameworks (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024).

The responses from Jessen and Räsänen reveal that Finnish companies often struggle to adapt their straightforward, reserved communication style to the fast-paced, relationship-driven nature of the U.S. business environment. Success in the U.S. market frequently depends on mastering networking, building trust, and engaging in small talk—skills that are not explicitly addressed by the cultural theories. Both interviewees stress the importance of hiring local talent, establishing a presence in the U.S., and tailoring business practices to align with local expectations. (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024.)

Räsänen highlights the need for Finnish businesses to receive cultural training to better understand U.S. norms, such as the value placed on clear communication and the art of storytelling (Räsänen 2024). Jessen adds that Finnish companies should focus on follow-up and relationship-building to meet the expectations of U.S. counterparts (Jessen 2024). Both agree that Finnish companies are often seen as trustworthy and reliable, which is a strength they can leverage in the U.S. market (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024).

The findings suggest that while the three cultural theories remain relevant as foundational tools for understanding cultural differences, they are insufficient to fully explain the successes or challenges Finnish companies face when entering the U.S. market. Practical challenges, such as adapting to the fast-paced, network-driven U.S. business culture, play a more significant role in determining success.

Finnish companies benefit from a foundational understanding of cultural differences, but they must also embrace practical strategies, such as hiring local talent, engaging in storytelling, and building strong networks, to succeed. The insights from Jessen and Räsänen underscore the importance of a more dynamic, flexible approach that integrates cultural understanding with actionable business strategies. This combination is key to overcoming challenges and achieving long-term success in the U.S. market.

9.3 Cultural differences in the daily work of the consulate

The third and final research question explored whether cultural differences manifest in the daily work of the consulate and whether other factors support the success of business transactions. The findings indicate that cultural differences do play a role, particularly in communication, follow-up practices, and networking. Jessen highlights the importance of mastering follow-up to align with the U.S.'s fast-paced business norms (Jessen 2024). Räsänen emphasises the critical role of likability, small talk, and understanding local business manners for Finnish companies operating in the United States (Räsänen 2024). These insights align with the theoretical framework of cultural intelligence (CQ), which identifies the ability to adapt to new situations and differentiate between universal and culture-specific behaviours as essential for navigating cultural contexts (Earley & Mosakowski 2004).

The cognitive aspect of CQ, which involves developing strategies to recognise shared values and behaviours, is particularly relevant. For example, Jessen and Räsänen both stress the importance of understanding U.S. cultural nuances and the value of building personal relationships and networks—key strategies for Finnish businesses navigating the American market (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024). These observations reflect the idea that cultural understanding requires more than rote learning of norms; it demands active observation and interpretation of behaviours (Earley & Mosakowski 2004).

The emotional/motivational dimension of CQ also plays a critical role in the success of Finnish companies in the U.S. market. Both Jessen and Räsänen highlight the need for confidence and perseverance when navigating cultural and operational challenges. As Earley and Mosakowski explain, confidence in one's ability to adapt and overcome setbacks is key to thriving in unfamiliar cultural environments. This is particularly relevant for Finnish companies that face challenges such as a lack of local networks or difficulties in adapting their business practices to the fast-paced U.S. market. (Earley & Mosakowski 2004; Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024.)

Beyond cultural differences, the findings emphasise the importance of other factors, such as trustworthiness, reliability, and personal relationships, in achieving successful business transactions. Jessen notes that Finnish companies are often viewed as trustworthy and reliable in the U.S., which can be a significant advantage in building long-term partnerships (Jessen 2024). Räsänen stresses the importance of hiring local talent, as well as maintaining a balance between Finnish values and local practices (Räsänen 2024).

Both respondents of the questionnaire emphasise that beyond cultural differences, other factors like trustworthiness, reliability, and personal relationships are crucial for the success of business transactions. Jessen points out that understanding and adapting to U.S. cultural nuances, hiring local talent, and maintaining a balance between Finnish values and local practices are key elements in supporting successful business interactions. These insights suggest that cultural intelligence (CQ) and practical adaptability are essential for navigating and succeeding in the U.S. market. (Jessen 2024; Räsänen 2024.)

10 Discussion

The motivation for this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of how the Consulate General of Finland in New York supports Finnish businesses in entering the U.S. market. The aim was to explore the three cultural factors and see if they are still relevant in todays business world, and can they be the reason for a business’s success or failure to making market entry.

This thesis explored the role of the Consulate General of Finland in New York in supporting Finnish businesses entering the U.S. market, analysed the relevance of cultural factors based on the theories of Hofstede, Hall, and Trompenaars, and identified other significant factors influencing market entry success. The findings confirm that cultural dimensions remain highly relevant in shaping cross-cultural business practices and highlight the practical importance of the consulate’s assistance in navigating these cultural complexities.

The thesis met its core objectives. The theoretical framework provided a solid foundation for understanding cultural dynamics, while the empirical data offered practical insights into the consulate's role and the challenges businesses face during market entry. The use of primary data, obtained through questionnaires sent to knowledgeable consulate members, enriched the analysis by connecting theoretical concepts to real-world experiences.

That said, there were areas for improvement. The sample size for the primary data was limited to two respondents, which impacts the generalisability and depth of the findings. A larger and more diverse participant pool would have strengthened the reliability of the results. Additionally, the questionnaire design could have been more robust. Including more open-ended questions or focusing on specific cultural challenges encountered by businesses might have yielded richer, more detailed data. Furthermore, incorporating interviews or case studies of Finnish businesses that successfully or unsuccessfully entered the U.S. market could have complemented the findings and provided a more comprehensive view.

The research adhered to ethical standards throughout the process. All data was gathered and handled responsibly, and participants' identities and responses were treated with respect. The participants were asked for consent regarding the use of their names in the report, ensuring transparency and ethical handling of their contributions. Secondary data was sourced from credible publications, ensuring a strong theoretical basis, while the primary data, although limited, was obtained from experts directly involved in Finnish-U.S. business relations. This combination of reliable sources and expert input enhances the credibility of the findings. Additionally, although the primary data relied on only two respondents, their perspectives aligned with insights from the secondary data, reinforcing the findings. Expanding the empirical data in future studies would enhance the reliability of conclusions drawn from this research.

This thesis has been an invaluable learning process. It has deepened my understanding of cultural dimensions, the challenges of market entry, and the role of consular support in international business. Through this process, I have

developed skills in research, critical thinking, and the practical application of theoretical concepts to real-world situations.

Future research could delve deeper into the comparative success rates of companies that have received support from a Finnish Consulate General in the United States versus those that have navigated the market entry process independently. Such studies could investigate specific factors contributing to the success or challenges faced by each group, including the role of cultural adaptation, the quality of consular support, and the types of businesses that benefit most from such assistance.

In summary, this thesis successfully explored how the Consulate General of Finland supports Finnish businesses entering the U.S. market, while also examining the role of cultural factors in market entry. Despite some limitations, such as the small sample size and scope of primary data, the findings align with existing theories and offer practical insights for businesses and consulates alike. The thesis highlights the importance of cultural intelligence and institutional support in navigating international markets, contributing to both academic discourse and the professional field.

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Appendix

Name:
Role at consulate:
Years at consulate:

Section 1: The Role of the Finnish Consulate in Supporting Finnish Companies

1. **How would you describe the Finnish Consulate's main role in supporting Finnish companies entering the U.S. market?**

Answer:

2. **What specific services or resources does the Consulate offer to Finnish companies trying to establish themselves in the U.S.?**

Answer:

3. **What are some key factors that contribute to the success or failure of Finnish companies in the U.S. market?**

Answer:

4. **How does the Consulate's support evolve as companies establish themselves in the U.S. market?**

Answer:

5. **How does the Consulate measure its own success in helping Finnish companies expand to the U.S.?**

Answer:

Section 2: Cultural Differences Between Finland and the U.S.

The cultural theories of Hofstede, Hall, and Trompenaars reveal distinct contrasts between Finland and the United States. **Hofstede's framework** highlights that while both countries share traits like individualism and minimal power distance, they diverge in their priorities. Finland values cooperation, long-term planning, and quality of life, whereas the U.S. emphasizes competition, immediate achievement, and individual accomplishment. These differences

shape not only social behaviors but also workplace practices and decision-making processes in both countries.

T. Hall's high-context versus low-context framework focuses on communication styles, showing that Finland relies more on implicit understanding, though it is gradually transitioning toward direct, low-context communication, particularly among younger generations. In contrast, the U.S. is a firmly low-context culture, where clear and direct communication is the norm. This difference underscores varying expectations for clarity and expression in interpersonal and professional interactions.

Trompenaars' dimensions add further layers to these cultural contrasts. Americans rigidly adhere to universal rules and laws (Universalism), while Finns adopt a more flexible approach based on specific circumstances (Particularism). Finns are also more sequential and emotionally restrained, preferring to "go with the flow," whereas Americans exhibit a greater task focus, spontaneity, and environmental control. Despite these differences, both countries share a strong sense of individualism and place high value on success as a measure of status.

6. **Are you familiar with cultural theories such as Hofstede's, Hall's or Trompenaars's cultural theories? If yes, do you believe these theories are still relevant in today's globalized business world, or do you think they are outdated and no longer important?**

Answer:

7. **How well do these cultural theories (Hofstede's, Hall's or Trompenaars's) explain the successes or challenges that Finnish companies face when doing business in the U.S.?**

Answer:

8. **In your daily work at the Consulate, do you observe cultural differences affecting your tasks and interactions? Are there any other concepts or factors you have identified that contribute to the success of Finnish companies in the U.S. market?**

Answer:

9. **Have you received any training or lessons on cultural differences between Finland and the U.S.? If so, what did you find most useful, and do you think more training is needed?**

Answer:

10. **What are the biggest cultural differences you've observed between Finnish and American business practices?**

Answer:

11. **Do you think Finnish companies should receive training in cultural differences before entering the U.S. market? Why or why not?**

Answer:

12. **Are there any cultural dimensions (like power distance, individualism vs. collectivism) that you feel are especially significant for Finnish companies in the U.S.?**

Answer:

13. **What are the biggest cultural differences you've observed between Finnish and American business practices? How do these differences affect Finnish companies' market entry?**

Answer:

14. **Do you think modern concepts like cultural intelligence (CQ) are more effective than traditional cultural theories (like Hofstede's dimensions) in explaining the successes or challenges Finnish companies face in the U.S. market?**

Answer:

Section 3: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Adaptation

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) = Refers to a person's ability to understand, adapt, and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. It goes beyond just being aware of cultural differences — it involves the skills to recognize these differences, adjust one's behavior, and communicate appropriately in cross-cultural contexts.

15. **Are you familiar with the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ)?**

Answer:

16. **In your experience, how important is cultural intelligence (CQ) for Finnish companies looking to expand into the U.S.?**

Answer:

17. **Do you believe the Finnish Consulate itself demonstrates cultural intelligence in its support of Finnish companies? If so, how?**

Answer:

18. **Do you think Finnish companies should receive training in cultural intelligence before entering the U.S. market? Why or why not?**

Answer:

19. **Which cultural theories (like Hofstede's cultural dimensions or Edward Hall's context theories) do you think are still relevant in Finnish-U.S. business interactions? Are there any you think are outdated?**

Answer:

20. **Do you think cultural intelligence is becoming more important as globalization increases, or is it less relevant now that businesses are operating more internationally?**

Answer: