

Development of Multicultural Competences in Companies

Lahti UAS, OSSI -Skills Up -project

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine how an organization can strengthen its multicultural competences. It revealed what kind of challenges a multicultural company can face and how multicultural skills can be developed. This study focused on the benefits of multiculturalism and explained how immigrants gain entrance to a work community.

This study was conducted in autumn 2016 and it is a part of the OSSI - Skills Up -project of Lahti University of Applied Sciences. The study concentrated on factors which increased multicultural know-how in businesses and organizations of the Päijät-Häme area and promoted the trained immigrants' employment.

The theoretical part of this study defined culture and concepts. It presented the benefits of multicultural competences and ways to develop them. Previous research and Finnish statistical information, which are related to the multicultural working life were demonstrated.

For the empirical section of this study, the data was obtained by conducting interviews with employees of Halton Marine Oy and Kemppi Oy. The study revealed the employees' experiences with multiculturalism in the companies. The interviews method of implementation was individual theme interview.

This study finds that the multicultural competences of the companies are developed mainly through experience rather than strategy. The challenges of multiculturalism are related to language skill and cultural differences. On the basis of the results, a list of recommendations was compiled and directed to all companies, to strengthen their multiculturalism.

Key words: culture, multiculturalism, multicultural competence, development, workplace, company, organization

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the introduction part, the background and the structure of this study are presented.

Finnish working life has become multicultural during the last twenty years. In many work communities, it is typical to operate in a multicultural working environment when more and more immigrant workers are coming from different cultures to seek employment. In the future, the trend will be growing, as due to aging population, the need for new workers will increase. (Tilastokeskus 2015.) At the moment, there are about 40 000 foreign people unemployed in Finland in 2016 (TEM 2016). According to the immigrant barometer of the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy, employment is the most important factor in integration and prevention of displacement of immigrants (Valtioneuvosto 2012). For that reason, companies have an important role in adapting immigrants to working life and that way in integrating them to Finnish society.

Companies globalize, they operate in international markets, over borders, which is the only way to create a sustainable future (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014,10). Due to internationalization, companies need to define what is meant by multiculturalism and how to operate in the multicultural work community. The values, beliefs and the differences between norms are the first issues which companies face in their business environment. In this situation, they will encounter new and unforeseen demands (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 19) at every level of working life.

When a company wants to develop and benefit from multiculturalism of the work community, information about different cultures and manners of people from different areas is needed. Development of multicultural competences of the whole work community is required (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 55). These abilities become a competitive advantage to companies in all the dealings of the business world (Lahti 2008, 21).

This study is a part of the research work of OSSI -Skills Up –project (OSSI -project). OSSI -project aims to promote employment and workplace skills development of young people with an immigrant background in the Lahti Region. The indirect target groups of the OSSI -project are immigrants already working as staff in organizations. This study concentrates on factors which promote the trained immigrants' employment and increase multicultural know-how in the businesses and organizations of the region. The research involves two global industrial companies, Halton Marine Oy and Kemppi Oy. The companies are located in Lahti and they cooperate with the Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS). The OSSI -project will result in a guidance and training model that operates in a network, which the key players will be committed to after the project (www.lamk.fi/ossi). Parties and implementers of the project are Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Salpaus Further Education and Lahti Adult Education Center.

The aim of this study is to find out how an organization can strengthen its multicultural competences and focus is on Finnish working life. Furthermore, this study clarifies the multicultural challenges the companies possibly face, how these challenges are solved, how multicultural work communities are developed and how immigrants acquire jobs. The answers to these questions are searched for by studying the existing literature and interviewing Finnish and foreign workers of Halton Marine Oy and Kemppi Oy, which are examined as multicultural work communities. The final result of this study is a list of recommendations to companies wanting to develop their multicultural competences.

The background of the research is presented in the first chapter. In the second, theory chapter determines definition of culture, Hofstede's National Culture Dimensions, the concepts of multiculturalism and competences, cultural and multicultural competences. It reveals the benefits of multicultural competences and ways to develop them, including the models of the multicultural competences: Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, Jokikokko's Dimensions of Cultural Competence and Brinkmann's & van Weerdenburg's Four Intercultural

Competences. It introduces the previous research and Finnish statistical information, which are connected to multiculturalism and development of multicultural competences. The third chapter presents the study questions and objectives, the cooperation companies are introduced and the research and analysis methods are explained. The fourth chapter reveals the research results based on the theme interviews conducted with employees of the cooperation companies. Finally, in the fifth chapter, the research process is analyzed and a list of recommendations for developing multicultural competencies is made on the basis of theory and empirical research. The reliability of the study is estimated and a proposal is made for further studies.

2 MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCES

This section covers the definitions of culture, the concepts of multiculturalism and competences, cultural and multicultural competences. It presents Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures, which are shown from the perspective of organizational culture. Furthermore, the benefits of multicultural competences and the ways to develop them are revealed. The previous research and Finnish statistical information, which are connected to multicultural working life are demonstrated.

Multiculturalism refers, in this study, to the differences between the members of the work community, which is based on different ethnic and national origins. Other factors described with multiculturalism, such as age, gender, gender minorities and religions are left outside this research. In this study, multicultural competence is also used generally to correspond to words with the same meaning, such as intercultural competence or intercultural sensitivity.

2.1 Definitions of Culture, Multiculturalism and Competences, Cultural and Multicultural Competences

2.1.1 Culture and Its Dimensions

Culture is defined in numerous ways. The word culture comes from the same root as the verb cultivate, meaning "to till the soil": the way people act on nature (Tompensaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 31). Culture is created by humans, confirmed by others, conventionalized, and passed on for younger people or newcomers to learn. It provides people with a meaningful context in which to meet, to think about themselves, and to face the outer world. (Tompensaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 32.) According to Bennett (2001), culture is the pattern of beliefs, behaviors, and values maintained by groups of interacting people. Hofstede writes that the culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. He points out that the "mind" stands for the head, heart, and hands – that is, for

thinking, feeling, and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes and skills. Culture is thought to consist of consciously, outwardly visible signs, unconscious values and customs. (Hofstede 2001, 9-10.) Culture permeates the everyday life of everyday things and the large value of the questions. (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 12.)

Knowing different cultures promotes the development of multicultural competences because culture regulates the use of feelings and the ways of expression. Professor Geert Hofstede's model, dimensions of national cultures, is well known. Different cultures can be measured and compared with the model, which has been divided into six different dimensions: power distance individualism, masculinity, avoidance of uncertainty, long-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

In the Power Distance, the larger the power-distance, the less members of a company expect that power is distributed unequally. Power is centralized among only a few people and there is a lot of supervisory personnel. The leaders are appreciated and workers are uneducated. In the small power-distance situation, the hierarchy is established for convenience. The subordinates and the superiors are equally treated. There is a limited number of superiors and managers rely on their own experience and on qualified subordinates. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 73-76.)

According to the dimension of Individualism and Collectivism, in the collective culture, the management is management of groups. The employer hires a person who belongs to an in-group, not an individual. In an individualist culture, the workers are supposed to be economic persons, but still an individual with their own needs. In an individualist culture, the superior estimates and gives direct feedback to the subordinates. A similar way of operating can spoil harmony in the collective culture, in which the feedback is indirectly given. In the collective culture, it often makes good sense to put persons from the same ethnic background into one crew whereas in the individualist cultures, an attempt is to break the forming of ethnic groups. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 119-124.)

The dimension of Masculinity versus Femininity presents that masculine style leaders are considered resolute and aggressive and conflicts should be solved with a good fight whereas the feminine style leaders act instinctively and search more for consensus, solving problems by agreeing and negotiating. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 164-170.)

Uncertainty Avoidance expresses how in cultures avoiding uncertainty, the work is controlled through laws and regulations. People have been programmed to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations and they try to control the uncontrollable. Weak uncertainty avoidance societies can feel emotional horror towards formal rules. These societies maintain more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles and things can be solved without rules. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 209-213.)

Long-term – Short -term orientation describes the attitude towards the future. In short term orientation, the main work values include freedom and rights. Managers and workers are psychologically in two camps and the focus of the managers is on this years' profits. In Long-term orientation, the main values are learning, honesty, adaptability, accountability and self-discipline. The targets have been set for a long period. Managers and workers share the same aspirations and the profit is expected after ten years. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 251.)

In the dimension of Indulgence vs. Restraint, indulgence means a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms. (Hofstede Centre 2016)

2.1.2 Concepts of Multiculturalism and Competences

The term multiculturalism is natural to use when talking about a group of people, members of which represent a number of cultural backgrounds and behaviors rising from them. Multiculturalism is the interaction and co-existence, which manifests itself as a dialogue, harmony and integration. It can also be considered an agreement or intent, to reciprocity, interest and respect. (Wallin 2013, 44.)

In existing literature and research, the concepts multicultural, intercultural and cross-cultural are often used in parallel. Inter alia, synonyms used for intercultural skills and competences are multi-ethnicity, sensitivity, cultural communication and intelligence. A general term is also diversity, which is used to describe the representatives of different cultures in the organization, taking into account variables such as age and gender. (Wallin 2013, 43.)

The concept of competence has many meanings. It became dominant in business organizations in the first place, in recruiting and selecting new employees. (Stoof et al. 2002, 346-349.) According to Hai & Wen, the United Kingdom school identifies competence from the work-orientation perspective as the output associated with appropriate standards of job performance. American scholars use the term competency from a worker-perspective. These two terms, competence and competency are used interchangeably, but the terms also supplement each other. Competency is an input measure and competence is an outcome. According to Tate (1995), "*Competency is one of the sets of behavior that the person must have and be able to display in order to perform the tasks and functions of a job with competence.*" (Hai & Wen 2010, 677-678.) According to Eraut, use of the term competence is no less diverse than the use of terms such as knowledge, skills, and ability (Eraut 1998, 127). Mirabile (1997) interprets the term nearly the same, competency is knowledge, skill, ability, problem solving, analytical thinking on a job or leadership. Some definitions include motives, benefits and values. Parry (1996) states that competency is a cluster of related knowledge, skills and attitudes that

affects one's job and that can be improved via training and development. According to Spencer & Spencer (1993) competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual, which means that competency is a fairly deep part of a person's personality and causes or predicts behavior and performance. Keen (1992) says that competence is an ability to handle situations, even unforeseen ones. (Stoof et al. 2002, 347.) According to Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2012, 352), the definition of competence is "a system of minimum standards and effective behaviors demonstrated by performance and outputs, what you do - how you apply your knowledge in practice".

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, 364) have an example of a cultural competence profile, where four categories define a person's competences in recognizing cultural differences and how the person respects those differences. It also takes into account a person's abilities to reconcile cultural differences with other people, to realize how these differences can be resolved and take the necessary steps to coordinate their cultural differences.

According to Jokikokko, the multicultural competence (MCC) concept describes the abilities and skills needed when people from different cultures are in interaction with each other. In addition, it includes functional as well as awareness related dimensions. (Jokikokko 2002, 85.) MCC is based on a variety of individual characteristics, such as flexibility, patience, positivity, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy and fairness. However, it is not automatic and not innate. Enabling personal growth is important. MCC requires conscious focusing, training and often coaching. (Wallin 2013, 75.) MCC represents the capacity to work successfully across cultures. Being multiculturally competent is more than just being polite or empathetic to people from other cultures; it is getting things done through people by capitalizing on cultural diversity. It includes skills such as identifying cultural rules, changing and creating group cultural norms, communicating across cultures, dealing with conflict, developing trust based relationships, understanding the constraints and opportunities

imposed by the micro-context of an interaction, and manipulating those when appropriate. (Nardon, Steers & Sanchez-Runde 2013.)

2.2 Development of Multicultural Competences

2.2.1 Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett's (2001) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Figure 1) describes intercultural growth and learning with the six stage process in which people develop themselves from an ethnocentric state to an ethno-relative state. The model focuses on the differences between cultures and how important it is to understand these differences. According to Bennett, intercultural sensitivity is not a natural outcome but it is learned. The more sophisticated worldview constructions of cultural difference people have, the more interculturally sensitive they become.

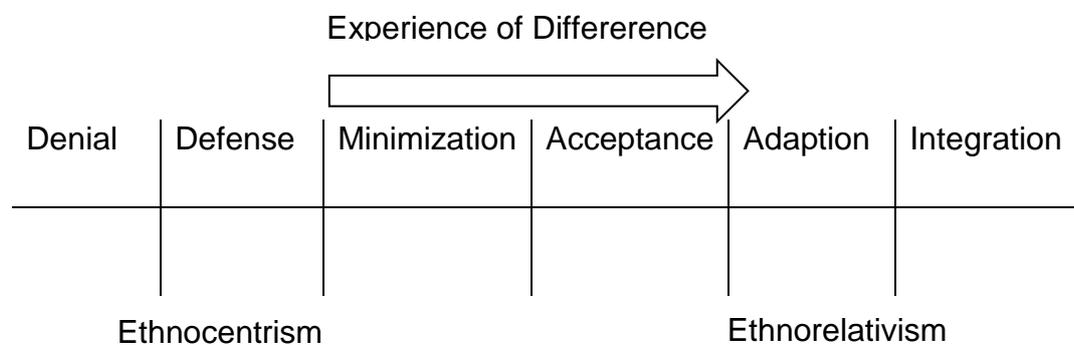


FIGURE 1. DMIS schematic (Bennett 2001)

In the first stage, people deny the existence of cultural difference. They have difficulties in separating different cultures and are unaware of their own culture. Organizations characterized by denial, are ignorant about cultural issues. If cross-cultural skills are trained in such organizations, this will be mainly through teaching basic language skills. Diverse workforce is

not employed systematically and all cultural difference is considered a problem. (Bennett 2001)

In the defense stage (Figure 1), people try to protect their own worldview, and see difference as a threat. The world has been divided into us and them. In these organizations the cultural differences are seen mainly as obstacles which must be avoided. The organizations may be over-confident or arrogant and their combative style can damage international partnerships. (Bennett 2001)

Minimization is a stage (Figure 1), where people may be interested in cultural variations and customs but underrate cultural differences. People still lack cultural self-knowledge and cultural self-awareness. Companies at minimization stage may exaggerate their sensitivity to diversity issues claiming that they are color-blind and tolerant. With extreme emphasis on pressure to create a form of uniform organizational culture, collisions between that culture and local culture may occur. (Bennett 2001)

The first stage of ethno-relativism is acceptance (Figure 1). People begin to accept cultural and behavioral differences such as use of language, nonverbal behavior and communication style. The organizations characterized by acceptance appreciate multi-formity and recruit multiform labor actively so that it also could retain a diverse workforce. (Bennett 2001)

In the adaption stage (Figure 1), people become emphatic towards cultural differences and they are able to interpret and evaluate situations from more than one cultural perspective. Organizations in this stage encourage education and training of intercultural competence. Multiform labor is appreciated and the differences between cultures are utilized as resources of multicultural teams. (Bennett 2001)

The last stage of ethno-relativism is integration (Figure 1). People recognize that to all behavior, there exists a cultural background. Cultural perspective is a normal part of self and people may see themselves as "citizens of the world". They look for the culture differences in order to

understand another person and to expand their own experiences. Organizations which belong to this stage are very global. Every policy, issue and action is examined from a cultural point of view and its strengths and restrictions are estimated. Attention is paid to the cultural roots of the company but observations are not really paid to the ethnic national identity of the organization. (Bennett 2001)

2.2.2 Dimensions of Cultural Competences

Katri Jokikokko (2002, 87) describes the intercultural competence dimensions of awareness, skills, attitudes and action (Figure 2). These dimensions have been very strongly connected with each other and they develop side by side, because the competence requires the appreciation of all the dimensions.

The most difficult dimension is attitudes. It affects all the other dimensions, being a precondition to an operation promoting equality and fairness. The attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes form early in childhood and it can be difficult to change them. They can be partly unconscious and, therefore, change can be difficult. (Jokikokko 2002, 88.)

By cultural awareness, Jokikokko (2002, 88) means consciousness of a person's own culture background and that of others, the values and norms held, as well as the ways of thinking and the behavior models directing the cultural action of a human being. The development of cultural consciousness provides the basis for interacting successfully with people coming from other cultures. However, people must be seen as individuals, not only as representatives of certain cultures. Cultural awareness includes the ability to identify prejudices, attitudes, assumptions and unjust practices. It also requires social knowledge and understanding of global perspectives.

Skills (Figure 2) include the ability to be critical, to see and understand things from a different point of view and the ability to empathize and to feel compassion. In short, having the ability to adapt in changing conditions. (Jokikokko 2002, 88.) Jokikokko determines social skills to be especially important. Key skills are an ability to interpret and to understand the language of the other culture, to interpret gestures, expressions and body language. Bennett (1995) adds to these skills the ability to solve problems and utilize negotiation and diplomatic skills. (Jokikokko 2002, 88.)

Competences of action refer to the courage to intervene in injustices and to operate actively against racism, prejudices and discrimination. A well-known phrase “think globally, act locally” is connected to this. It refers to the operation for human rights, democracy and environment. (Jokikokko 2002, 88.)

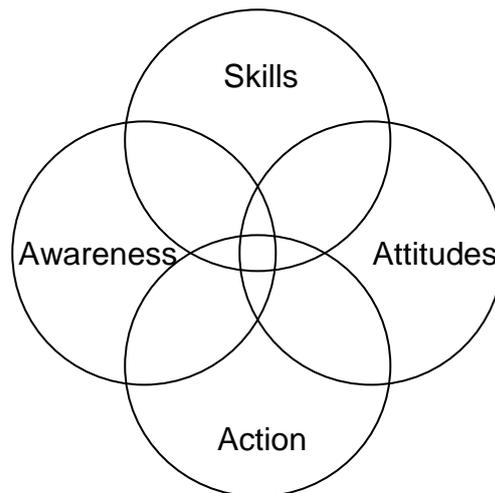


FIGURE 2. Dimensions of Intercultural Competence (Jokikokko 2002, 87)

Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg (2014, 36) also present a model of four intercultural competences of employees who work effectively in multicultural organizations (Table 1). The four degrees and their facets reflect peoples' differences and test their assumptions and strategies in intercultural situations.

Intercultural sensitivity (Table 1) is the degree to which people are actively interested in other peoples' cultural backgrounds, needs and points of view. The two facets are cultural awareness and attention to signals. People understand that their interpretations, values and norms are bound to the culture. They are able to consider different cultural perspectives as equally valid. In social situations, people look for information about others' thoughts and feelings by paying attention to verbal and nonverbal signals. (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 36.)

In the second degree of intercultural communication, people actively monitor how they communicate with people from other cultures. The facets are active listening, and adapting communicative style. When people communicate with others, they are mindful and pay attention to each other's expectations and needs. People can adjust how they communicate and fine-tune a message to the demands of the cultural requirements. (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 36.)

Building commitment is a third degree where people actively try to influence social environment. The facets build relationships and reconcile stakeholders when people invest in developing relations and networks. People try to understand the interests of the different interest groups and create solutions to satisfy these needs. (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 36.)

TABLE 1. The four IRC competences and their facets (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 36)

INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY		INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION	
We are actively interested in other people's cultural backgrounds, their needs and perspectives.	Facet 1: Cultural Awareness Facet 2: Attention to Signals	We actively monitor how we communicate with people from other cultures.	Facet 1: Active Listening Facet 2: Adapting Communicative Style
BUILDING COMMITMENT		MANAGING UNCERTAINTY	
We actively try to influence our social environment, based on a concern for relationships and integrating people and concerns.	Facet 1: Building Relationships Facet 2: Reconciling Stakeholders Needs	We see uncertainty and complexity of culturally diverse environments as an opportunity for personal development.	Facet 1: Openness to Cultural Diversity Facet 2: Exploring New Approaches

In Brinkmann's & van Weerdenburg's model, managing uncertainty is the degree to which the culturally multiform environment is seen as an opportunity for personal development. The facets are openness to cultural diversity and exploring new approaches. People are ready to deal with the complexity that has been added to a culturally diverse environment and the multiformity is experienced as a source of learning and innovation. People take risks and try new ideas. (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 36.)

2.2.3 Benefits of Development of Multicultural Competences

Multicultural competences improve the organization's productivity and profits, increase understanding of different customers, promote creativity and innovation (since different viewpoints are displayed), enhance the skills of all staff utilization, arouse the talented workers' interest towards the employer, strengthen employee engagement, reduce turnover and improve the company's image. (Bairoh & Trux 2010, 200.) According to Bennett (2001), multicultural teams with more creative assignments and with an inter-culturally competent leader are more productive than their mono-cultural counterparts. At a multilingual workplace, the language skill of the whole staff increases. The exchange of ideas in other than native language encourages all the workers to use a foreign language. (Yli-Kaitala 2013, 50.) The most important benefits of a multicultural work force are potential for improved quality of customer service, availability of labor, increased cultural competency and improved working environment (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006).

According to Tipper, commercial benefits of having diverse workforce with greater cultural awareness, more points of view, different approaches or best practice from different industries will lead to the improvement of the bottom line. This will generate respect and awareness for the individual amongst the workforce. Diverse thinking enhances evaluation and problem-solving ability. It increases product sales as the workforce reflects the needs of the customer base. Having diversity in product development teams helps ensure that products are desired and easily utilized by more people. Advertising is more effective, because advertisements can be understood by and reach a culturally broader audience. (Tipper 2004, 159.) However, reaching benefits requires an increase in equal opportunities and equal treatment. (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006.)

2.2.4 Development of Multiculturalism and Competences

According to Yli-Kaitala et al., the development of multiculturalism is a long-term process, which requires an increase in staff knowledge, attitudes, communication skills and management support for all these processes. The change towards multiculturalism requires individual, organizational and cultural changes. It should be seen as a two-way orientation of the whole work community. (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 55.) It must also be connected to business goals, to the strategies and functions of the staff management. The development of the multicultural work community is needed so that the business goals can be reached effectively and justly from all the parties' points of view. (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006.) The strategy indicates the organization's priorities, what is meant by multiculturalism and its leadership and whom it touches. The organization should define the main principles and approaches of the operation and diversity-strategic approaches. In the strategy, responsibility issues and available support systems should be shown. It clarifies monitoring and its effects on the performance evaluation of persons in charge, for rewarding, remuneration and career development. (Lahti 2008, 130.)

According to Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg, defining and developing intercultural competences is a response to organizations' growing need to have staff competent to work across cultures (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg 2014, 17). According to Crowne, developing an understanding for another culture is gained from experiences in that culture and will lead to a deeper understanding of cultural norms. The individual can become acquainted with different cultures, for example, by reading, studying, traveling (including expatriates) or interacting with someone from a different culture. When people go abroad, they learn what is and what is not appropriate. This indicates that cultural exposure can impact development of cultural understanding. (Crowne 2008, 393-394.) However, Piekkari claims that a posting to foreign countries does not necessarily expand know-how of foreign cultures. It often remains superficial and they do not really integrate into the culture of the target

country at all because expatriates easily spend time among the other foreigners. (Piekkari 2009, 158.)

The required skills and behaviors in foreign cultures are bound to the context. In the interaction between cultures, the parties actively build a suitable strategy for different situations. An ability to identify the required strengths and skills, but also the ability to utilize them is needed. Situation-specific know-how requires broad knowledge about the world, which increases with practice. Intercultural know-how and multilingualism are skills which should be appreciated and should be rewarded on the labor market, whether it is a question of an expert working in an international field or an immigrant. (Pinini Kemppainen 2009, 110-125.)

The development of multiculturalism has stopped in many countries at the level of raising public awareness and voluntary development programs inside companies are relatively rare (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006). Poorly executed diversity training can easily turn against the interests of all parties. Culturally perceived valuation of different workers may decrease, the majority of the representatives can meet reverse discrimination, morale can suffer, stereotypes can be strengthened and legal expenses increase. (Bairoh & Trux 2010, 205.) According to Gillian, people have a tendency to indulge in interpersonal conflicts. Culturally diverse workers have different thoughts, norms, customs, values, traditions and trends. When culturally diverse workers should work in a group, different opinions can hinder the development of unity and achieving common goals. The interpersonal conflict results in lost productivity and development of negative emotions among employees, which can be detrimental to the organization. However, Al-Jenaibi's study (2011) showed that most workers agreed that group work with culturally diverse people helps to overcome cultural differences through shared experiences. (Gillian 2014, 89-90.) So that the advantages of multiculturalism could be used, different people should be accepted and there should be more time for modified education and development methods for supporting it (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006). Developing multicultural programs and practices should be developed with the same

accountability and maintenance priorities as other valued programs within the organization (Connerly & Pedersen 2005, 83).

According to Chrobot-Manson, the literature on diversity training lacks evidence of any evaluation of training effectiveness. Training programs have been criticized for many reasons. The most criticism is towards a lack of follow-through to creating lasting change in the organization, the vast majority of programs only last a day or less and very few organizations take the time to clarify training objectives and goals. Many programs focus on increasing awareness of group differences, which can underline prejudices and stereotypes and hinder work group cohesiveness by emphasizing differences. Chrobot-Manson predicts that long-term, theoretically based training in cultural diversity would increase positive attitudes toward interracial situations at work. (Chrobot-Manson 2012, 202-205.)

Fitzsimmons, Miska & Stahl recommend using corporate training and development programs. The first goal is to support multi-cultural employees to become more conscious of their skills and abilities, and the second goal is developing similar skill sets among mono-cultural employees. Mentorship and coaching are best suited to the first goal, while global experience could achieve both. In experiential programs, employees work with local partners in developing countries from weeks to months. The programs help in acquiring multicultural skills and if a program like this is not possible, the employees could carry out short term field experiences, for example, by looking after homeless people or working with juvenile delinquents to provide cultural immersion experiences and perspective-talking skills. (Fitzsimmons, Miska & Stahl 2011, 204-205.)

Business development often takes place from top to bottom. As in many cases, the development of multiculturalism should take place together with the employer, the employees and the stakeholders. When the companies commit themselves to the promotion of diversity, they can use, for example, interviews with personnel groups, culture and attitude surveys,

equality and atmosphere surveys, as well as the assistance of external experts for the making of development plans. (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006.)

Pauli Juuti makes a proposal on the development of multiculturalism based on the ethnic diversity (ETMO) -research project, *Multiculturalism as a Resource*, which was published in 2005. It is a study on multiculturalism and its development in the Finnish working community. The study sheds light on the relations between the majority population and immigrants in sixteen workplaces during the years 2002-2004. Juuti's study was conducted in organizations located in Turku and the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Juuti made surveys of how the immigrants have adapted themselves to working life and how the Finns have adapted themselves to the immigrants at the workplaces. The purpose of the study was both to illustrate and strengthen multiculturalism at workplaces. The study was a part of the ETMO -project aiming to repel racism and xenophobia on the labor market. The results of the research were brutal. Finland poorly tolerated diversity and in the opinion of the Finns, immigrants should adapt to Finnish culture unconditionally. (Juuti 2005.)

The ETMO-project showed that the combination of different ways of development leads to good results. Good practices in the development of multiculturalism consist of changes in workplace rules such as multicultural strategy and planning, code of ethics and workplace values. Among others, concrete measures in terms of training sessions, briefings, management and executive training, orientation program, language training, an excursion to another workplace, the creation of networks, language bank, drawing up of the technical terminology in separate languages, common leisure activities, evening gatherings and parties involving both immigrants and the majority population. Understanding the richness brought by cultural variance, as well as concretization of cultural diversity can be enhanced by using methods such as exhibitions, drama and experiences. Top management should give sufficient resources for the development of multiculturalism and do it in good co-operation with the staff to expand mental capital. (Juuti, P. 2005, 133-134.)

2.3 Multicultural Working Life in Finland

Finland's population growth will continue in future but according to forecasts, the annual number of deaths will exceed births in 2034. It is supposed that net immigration will maintain the growth of population still after that. Annual net immigration is forecasted to be 15 000 persons. The proportion of working age population will decrease from the current 66 per cent to 58 per cent by the year 2040 and to 56 per cent by the year 2060. The demographic dependency ratio, i.e. the number of children and pensioners per one hundred persons of working age will rise rapidly in the near future. In 2060, the demographic dependency ratio is estimated to be 79.1. The number of pensioners over 65 years and older will almost double, from the current 905 000 to 1.79 million by 2060. (Suomen virallinen tilasto 2016)

Baby boomers started retiring in 2010 (Suomen virallinen tilasto 2016). Therefore, the objectives of the integration program of the State of Finland include the improvement of immigrants' labor market position. The aim is to raise the foreigners' rate of employment from 59,4 per cent (the level in 2014) to 62 per cent in 2016 and decrease the unemployment rate from 29 per cent (in 2015) to 27 per cent during 2016. Furthermore, the objective is to increase the number of the immigrants taking up entrepreneurship with start-up grants from the 2014 level of 699 up to 750 in 2016. (TEM 2016)

According to Statistics Finland (2015), in 2014, 241 000 15-64-year-olds persons of foreign descent were living regularly in Finland. Their rate of employment was ten percent weaker than that of the population with Finnish background. In 2014, 201 615 people were living in the area of Päijät-Häme of which 5993 were foreign inhabitants. 1 142 (40 % of the foreign labor force) were unemployed. In 2015, people representing more than 120 nationalities lived in Päijät-Häme. The six biggest foreign citizenship groups were Russians, Estonians, Thais, Swedes, Turks and Chinese. (ELY 2016)

2.3.1 Immigrants Entrance to the Finnish Work Community

Previous studies (Vartia et al. 2007, 61; Söderqvist 2005, 11; Juuti 2005, 140) have shown that personal relations with Finnish people are a significant factor in the immigrants' entrance to the labor market. It is easier to get employed to companies with already decades' tradition in employing immigrants (Juuti 2015, 140).

According to Statistical Office survey in 2014, foreigners were less often employed in expert professions than Finnish people and they were over-represented in worker occupations (Figure 3). Foreign employed persons represented the highest proportion of work force among cleaners and housemaids (of which foreign origin accounted for 23% of the total), assistant kitchen and food workers (18% foreign), as well as service and sales workers (11% foreign). Fixed-term part-time jobs and shift work is common and working hours are often evenings, nights and weekends. A quarter of the entrepreneurs operated in the accommodation field and in the nutrition field and they work a longer week than the Finnish entrepreneurs. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

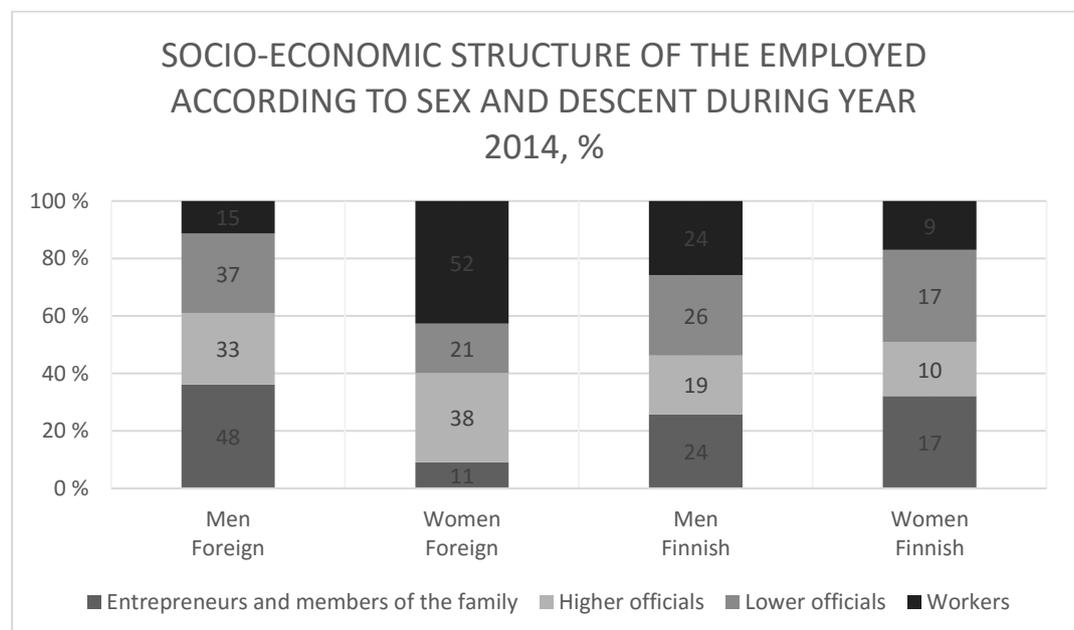


FIGURE 3. Working-age people of foreign extraction and people of Finnish background socio-economic structure of the employed according to sex and descent during year 2014, %. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

According to Lahti (2008), immigrants' employment is affected by the fact that the functions of staff management are extremely culturally bound. This is because people's cooperation, motivation, commitment and confidence are dealt with. Multiculturalism of the staff applies to all the sectors of managing human resources. An ethical and vocational responsibility is connected to recruiting, so that the principles of multiculturalism, equality and fairness can come true. (Lahti 2008, 135-140.)

Söderqvist's research shows that foreigners' employment is prevented by the fact that attention is not strategically paid to them and the companies cannot utilize foreigners in their business. The employment of foreigners is prevented, as the diversity of foreigners is not taken into account in human resource management processes and in personnel management of staff. Foreigners are recruited like they would be Finnish. It is not common in human resource management to include wider caretaking of the foreign person's welfare than for the domestic workers, as a good practice. To utilize better the foreigners' know-how, work communities should know better the backgrounds of its staff and the issues related to foreigners' employment should be followed regularly. (Söderqvist 2005, 10-12.) The multicultural competences often remain unclear in companies due to the lack of current information on the staffs' language or cultural skills. In recruitment, emphasis is on technical skills or leadership. Language and cultural knowledge is a good addition. (Piekkari 2009, 151.)

According to Söderqvist, the attitude will be considerably different if the core of the operation of a company or organization is international or the managing director is a foreigner. Also, a foreigner's employment is promoted by the fact that the employer has personal international experiences or if the core of the business is international. (Söderqvist 2005, 10-11.) In practice, multicultural companies are very ethnocentric. The domestic nationality, culture collection and language capital of the parent company is strongly represented in the higher management. The management and the board of directors are internationalized last. (Piekkari 2009, 157.) In order to strengthen multicultural competence, organizations must involve minorities in decision-making positions and share power with

them (Connerly & Pedersen 2005, 83). A heterogeneous management is better able to perceive internal and external impulses and react to them in time. It is able to more broadly see the expectations of the market, investors, clientele and staff. The management does not experience changes as threats but as a part of the change process of the organization. (Lahti 2008, 43.)

However, some companies appreciate that there is a commercial benefit to be gained by widening the candidate search to include diverse groups. Companies want workforce to reflect the fact that they are in global business and they want to attract international talents from across Europe. In diversity recruitment, the key is to widen the pool of recruits that companies are targeting, and to have an effective strategy to reach the target audience. Increasing an organization's diversity is crucial in ensuring that the business does not alienate any potential customers or consumers. (Tipper 2004, 159-160.) Diversity in the workplace increases the tendency of organizational personnel to overcome culture shock as the business expands in other countries and becomes international. An organization can use workers' knowledge to gather information, for example, about local customs and laws. Diverse workforce is also useful when people work as expatriates and they have information about the culture of the foreign country to avoid culture shock. When the cultural challenges can be solved inside the company, time, cost and energy can be saved. (Gillian 2014, 90.) Fitzsimmons, Miska & Stahl recommend hiring people with a wide variety of multicultural backgrounds and to create visible signs that the company values multicultural employees. Overall, Fitzsimmons', Miska's & Stahl's study shows that organizations with a wrong type of culture are less likely to benefit from their multicultural workers. Hiring multicultural employees is not enough, it is important to set up the conditions that allow their skills to emerge. (Fitzsimmons, Miska & Stahl 2011, 204.)

Koivunen, Ylöstalo & Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta have studied inequality in recruitment in Finland. Their study presented diversity as an advantage to both the employees and to the company. Diversity was seen as a positive challenge. Customers benefit and companies develop as a result of employing a diverse, value-adding staff. According to several recruiters, the ethnic background of the applicant is unimportant. An ideal worker speaks perfect Finnish, regardless of the language requirement of the job. (Koivunen, T., Ylöstalo, H. & Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, K. 2015, 15-17.)

English is a foreign language to the majority of the Finnish workers (Piekkari 2009, 155). However, a common business language often is English in multinational companies. According to Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, the role of the other languages than that of the organization's home language should be recognized and their value appreciated for business success (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta 2011), whereas according to Piekkari, the common language of a company makes the perception of misunderstandings and of interpretation differences more difficult. It also reduces the need to develop and improve language and cultural skills and takes attention away from their differences. (Piekkari 2009, 155.)

Some of the factors affecting immigrants' work supply are proficiency in Finnish language, education and work experience in Finland (Vartiala et a. 2007, 61). The language proficiency requirement is justified with general language skills of the work community, with the customers' demands and industrial safety factors (Söderqvist 2005, 11). In Juuti's study, it appeared that lack of Finnish language skill caused problems at the workplaces. The majority population did not understand reasons why the immigrants give an impression that they understand what is said in Finnish. The immigrants experience that they must pretend to understand what is said, otherwise their job is threatened. (Juuti 2005, 140.)

The Foreign labor and welfare survey results indicate that foreigners who speak Finnish on a level which corresponds to the native language or advanced level (Figure 4) are as well employed as people with Finnish origins. However, a language skill level of average or beginner seems to have a negative effect on employability. Out of the first generation immigrants between ages 15-64 years, three out of four at least spoke Finnish or Swedish on the average level. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

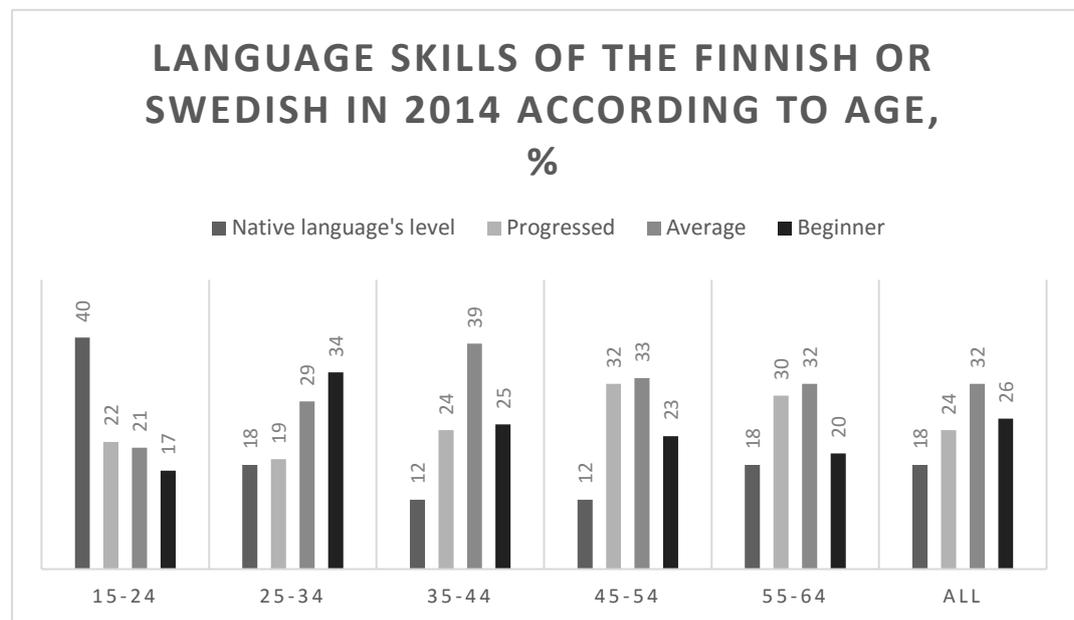


FIGURE 4. Foreign born 15-64-year-old people's self-estimated language skills of Finnish or Swedish in 2014 according to age, %. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

2.3.2 Finnish Multicultural Work Community

Following Hofstede's classification, Finnish working life can be said to represent an individualist and feminine culture. It has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty and it can be categorized as normative and indulgent. Hierarchy is for convenience only and people have equal rights. Management is the management of individuals striving for consensus.

Managers count on the experience of their team members and employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and organizations operate on first name basis.

Communication is direct and participative. The employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage. Hiring and promotion decisions are in principle based on merit only. The focus is on “working in order to live”, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives but still have an inner urge to be busy and work hard. (Hofstede Centre 2016)

Integrating the immigrant to the work community is a reciprocal process, which affects the fellow workers' and superiors' attitudes and also the immigrant's own behavior and attitude (Matinheikki-Kokko 2007, 64).

Finnish workplaces desire to merge "different" personnel, i.e. those with foreign-, migrant or ethnic minority background. They are supposed to conform to the prevailing Finnish organizational culture (Juuti 2005, 140.), although the purpose would be the adaption of both, the minority and the majority population to new ways of action.

According to Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari (2006), the promotion of multiculturalism often includes promotion of equality that is based on legislation and everybody's similar treatment. In Juuti's study, the similarity of speech gave legitimacy to the treatment of different value in the work community (Juuti 2005, 141). Individual treatment differs from treating everybody in the same way. The reason for similar treatment is the assumption that everybody has similar needs. From the approach which emphasizes “similarity”, unequalising politics and practices often follow. (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006.) People have a habit of trying to dispel differences caused by the culture, to get them to the level within rational thinking, this way differences can be dealt with through rules and prohibitions (Juuti 2005, 141). Change in multiculturalism has succeeded best if minorities are not assimilated, nor is the majority adapted to minorities' manners but both parties bend the rules and compromise (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006). Workers should be encouraged to

value their colleagues as individuals and for the talents they have (Tipper 2004, 160).

In Söderqvist's study, skillful management can be used to reach the advantages of multiculturalism and reduce challenges. In the work of superiors, interaction is quite different if subordinates are foreigners. Superiors have to talk about issues clearly and matters must be explained more hands-on. In the work, directing, orientation, engagement and integration, attention must be paid to the differences between the cultures and foreigners' special needs. (Söderqvist 2005, 11.) Managers need to invest time in understanding the employees' personal diversity and motivators which may vary significantly from existing staff (Tipper 2004, 160). They have to see immigrants individual difference as a resource and as a success factor (Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006).

Superiors should see the effect of their own views and attitudes on others and make all the workers feel appreciated. Being a superior requires situational sensitivity, openness and social skills. (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 21-22.) A multi-culturally competent manager will attempt to understand racial issues and take an active role in supporting workers who face cultural or racial challenges. The manager will deal openly with diversity issues and take steps to increase minority representation and retention. (Chrobot-Manson 2012, 201.) Regardless cultural background, superiors have to intervene immediately in discrimination or in improper treatment. They have to make clear that discrimination is disapproved of. (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 76.)

Good orientation is the basis for immigrant workers' success. Time must be reserved for orientation and used in a number of ways to ensure the understanding of the message, especially in matters related to occupational safety. It would be worth considering that the material related to occupational safety would be translated into the immigrants' native language. (Yli-Kaitala et al. 2013, 24-26.)

Impartial treatment of workers from different backgrounds is one significant resource of work organizations and a key factor in a functional multicultural workplace. The support (Figure 5) and help obtained from the co-workers are important factors which have a positive effect on job satisfaction, especially amongst the immigrant background workers. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

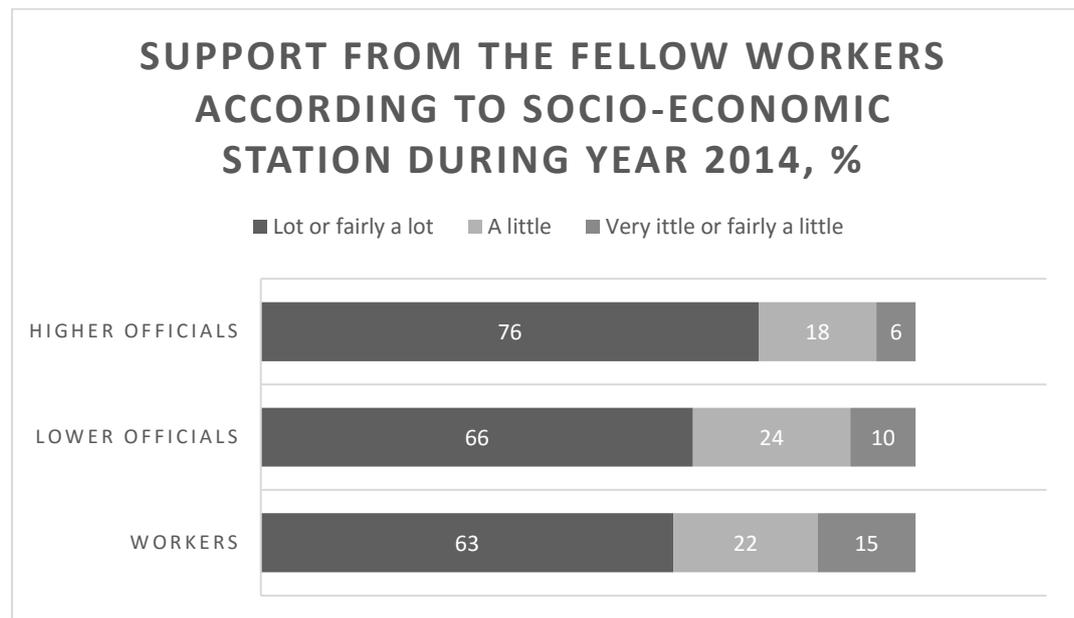


FIGURE 5. Foreign salary earners' estimation of the support from fellow workers according to socio-economic station during the year 2014, %. (Tilastokeskus 2015)

Through the co-workers, the immigrants may learn the language, the customs and the rules of Finnish working life, as well as attain a wider understanding of Finnish culture (Tilastokeskus 2015). The culture of the workplace affects how employees interact with each other. It consists of formal and informal cultural operation. The formal has been defined in strategic plans and informal tells about local ways and practices, how the staff manages its work. A company's own jargon or language has often developed at workplaces and employees use nicknames for people and

places. To new workers, particularly to immigrants whose language skill is inadequate, the inside information of the work community does not open easily. Therefore, immigrants should also be familiar with the rules of the work community. (Verma 2005, 60-61.)

3 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

This chapter reveals the research questions and objectives. It introduces the cooperation companies, presents the empirical research method and the method of the empirical research analysis.

3.1 Research Objectives and Questions

The objective of the research was to examine multiculturalism in the cooperation companies which are operating in Lahti and how it is reflected in these production environments. The subject was the workers' experiences with multiculturalism in the companies, which came out in the interviews. At the end of the research, there is a list of recommendations, made for the development of multicultural competencies of organizations.

The main research question is:

How can an organization strengthen its multicultural competences?

The research problem is divided into three sub questions:

- How do immigrants enter companies?
- Where are multicultural challenges created?
- How are challenges solved?

3.2 The Cooperation Companies

Halton Marine Oy

Halton Group is a family business owned by the Halttunen family. It was founded in 1969 and it is specialized in indoor climate and indoor environment products, services and solutions. The solutions range from public and commercial buildings to healthcare and laboratories, professional kitchens and restaurants. Halton Group provides indoor climate solutions for marine and offshore applications. The organization's expertise and product ranges cover air diffusion, airflow management, fire

safety, kitchen ventilation, air purification and indoor environment management. (Halton Oy 2016)

According to a company presentation, Halton Group operates in 32 countries. The organization's turnover was 198 M€ and number of staff was 1400 in 2015. Halton Group has production plants in 9 countries, licensed manufacturing in 4 countries and research and development in 7 countries. Halton Oy has three strategic business areas: SBA Halton, SBA Foodservice and SBA Marine. (Halton 2016)

Halton Marine Oy is located in Lahti. It started as a legal limited company in 2012. In the past, it was part of Halton Oy and nowadays the parent company is Halton Group Ltd. It offers cabin and galley ventilation, fire safety, airflow management and air distribution systems. Halton Marine also supplies indoor climate products for marine environments. The company focuses on solutions that ensure safe and comfortable conditions for cruise ships, naval vessels and oil rigs. (Halton 2016)

The turnover of Halton Marine Oy was 36,7 M€ in 2015. The budget for 2016 is 31,7 M€ and the number of staff is about 140 of which 70 are on the production side. At the moment, 8 regular foreigners representing 6 different nationalities are working in Halton Marine. In addition, the sales organization has 8 foreign vendors. Employment of the foreigners begun between the years 1998-2001. In practice, the company has been employing 10-15 foreigners during the last five years, and on annual level 2-5 trainees. Almost all of the foreign employees have come through the training and a few of them have been in several practical training periods. (Halton 2016)

Kemppi Oy

Kemppi Oy was founded in 1949 and its owner is the Kemppi family. The welding company develops intelligent equipment, welding production management software and professional services to support demanding industrial applications as well as the needs of consumers. The organization's home office is located in Lahti. Kemppi Oy has over 600 employees in 17 countries and the turnover was 110 M€ in 2015. Kemppi Oy has offices in 16 countries and sales presentation in more than 60 countries. The company has regular export to more than 70 countries. Kemppi Oy has two factories in Lahti and one in Chennai, India. (Kemppi 2016)

At its highest, there have been 25 foreigners working in the production. Now there are 180 employees of which 15 are foreigners. They usually come to the company through summer jobs and practical training. (Kemppi 2016)

3.3 Empirical Research Method

Individual theme interview (Appendix 1) was chosen as the interview method of implementation. In a semi-structured theme interview, the answers are not bound to the alternatives but the interviewees can answer in their own words and the interview is focused on certain themes which are discussed. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 47). In the theme interview, all the interviewees have the same questions, but the form and order of the questions can vary. The individual interview was chosen as the research method, because people are examined and all experiences, thoughts, beliefs of the individual and feelings can be studied with this method. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 48.) Therefore, the theme interview was found to be a suitable method, because the researcher wanted to talk openly and to find out, how the interviewees had experienced the multiculturalism of the work community. Also, the interview is a flexible method and allows specifications (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 36).

The planning of the study began by becoming acquainted with the OSSI-project in March 2016. The subject and the research problem was specified in April-May 2016. At the same time, a literary review of the earlier studies which are related to the subject was begun. When the research questions and the themes had been formulated, to get the needed information, the companies and interviewees to be examined were to be found. The companies in the research have cooperated with Lahti UAS earlier and the leader of the OSSI -project knew the persons from whom to request the possibility to do the interviews in the companies. She negotiated the companies' permission to interview their staff. Meeting with the contact persons and becoming acquainted with the companies took place in May 2016. Both companies reacted positively to assisting this study. According to Hirsijärvi & Hurme, when a researcher wants to know how the workers of the company have experienced matters, the interviewees are worth dividing according to a hierarchical rank (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 59). Therefore, people who work in different positions were chosen as interviewees. The interviews were set to take place in August 2016.

There were five representatives of the preset target groups. To obtain different points of view for the research, a Manager, an HR manager, a Superior, an Immigrant worker and a Finnish worker were chosen as interviewees from each company, altogether 10 people. Two of the workers in production were immigrants and the remaining eight interviewees were Finnish. The companies were able to select the interviewees from the occupational groups appointed in advance by the researcher.

The interviewees knew the themes of interview beforehand. According to advance information received by the researcher, all of them spoke Finnish, and the questions were asked in Finnish. The interview questions were made based on the research questions. Because the interviews are often situations about the everyday life in which becoming understood requires sticking to familiar expressions (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 53), the questions were made as easy as possible to understand. They were also

phrased so that it was not possible to answer them directly, no or yes. The functionality of the questions was tested before the actual interviews by interviewing four test persons, which all were Finnish.

The themes of the interview were:

- Immigrants' entrance to the work community
- Working in a multicultural work community
- The development of a multicultural company

To accomplish the best interaction, the interviews were made at the workers' workplace, in a familiar environment and during their working hours. The contact persons had chosen peaceful negotiation rooms as interview places, where it was easy to pop over in the midst of the workday. To perceive a general view on the multiculturalism of the companies, the first interviewees were the managers. According to Hirsijärvi & Hurme, the ethical content of the interview plan is to get the consent of the persons to be interviewed and to guarantee confidentiality (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 20). Therefore, the interviewees were first told about the research and about its purpose. Information about the themes of interviews had also been sent to the contact persons of the companies beforehand by email. It was explained to the interviewees that the interviews were confidential and they were asked permission to use the material, for example, direct quotes. (Ruusuvuori, Tiittula & Aaltonen 2005, 41.) It was agreed that the interviews were recorded and were interrupted if the interviewee for some reason wanted so. Permission to use the material was also recorded. Attitude towards the record was generally positive. Only one person asked not to write about a subject discussed for the research report.

The researcher chose a neutral role for herself, according to Ruusuvuori, Tiittula & Aaltonen, an interview is a two-way interaction in which the interviewer leads the discussion (Ruusuvuori, Tiittula & Aaltonen 2005, 23), talks distinctly and intelligibly, is an active listener, empathic but neutral. Furthermore, s/he must not be surprised, lead or present her/his

own opinions. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 97-103.) The interviewer tried to be as neutral as possible and reacted to the answers by nodding or by answering briefly, for example ok (Ruusuvuori, Tiittula & Aaltonen 2005, 45).

All of the Finnish interviewees understood the issues well but for some questions clarification was asked for. The immigrants had a little challenge to understand what was meant. Sometimes, a question was not understood or understood in the opposite way it was intended. Even though the matter was presented in many different ways, the opportunity to use English was given, examples and synonyms were used, still a small part of the answers remained to the interviewers' interpretation. The interviewees seemed honest in their answers but for some questions they did not want to answer. Then they answered something else or said that s/he was the wrong person to answer the question.

The most difficult situation was created when the interviewee asked for support to his answer and asked for an opinion in which case the interviewer passed the question neutrally by answering that it was a difficult question. Sometimes the interviewee had a monologue which did not even answer the question. The interviewer did not want or dare to interrupt in that hope, that the interviewee would have said something interesting. Overall the interviews went smoothly, in a relaxed atmosphere.

The interviews lasted about 30-45 minutes per interview and they were made in three days. The interviews were saved immediately after each interview, in the recorder, in a computer, on a USB stick, and a cloud. The recordings were retained only until that time when the transcription had been made.

3.4 Empirical Research Analysis Method

Content analysis was used as the analysis method for the empirical research. The transcription of the interview material was made soon after the interviews. In accordance with the interviewer's opinion, the most important matters, which touched the theme were transcribed word for word. Where the information did not touch the research directly, the core content was transcribed. Only the verbal communication was transcribed, but the words that were emphasized more clearly, were written down. Altogether, 43 pages of transcribed raw text was accumulated in the font Calibri size 11, spacing 1. To protect anonymity, the interview recordings were destroyed after the interviews had been transcribed. The researcher will retain the transcribed interview material for 24 months for possible other researchers. First, the transcribed text was read repeatedly and observations were marked to the text. The researcher used inductive reasoning, which focused on research material (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 136). As Kananen (2015, 167), in his guidebook has advised, the issues were segmented and changed to a table format in a word processor. After this, the text was encoded into two levels. First, by the keywords which described the contents of the table best and on the basis of them, the parts were connected to the themes. The different themes were also marked with different colors. This way, the contents related to each other could be clearly perceived. Before the results were analyzed, company material was merged into a single file. The more often the material was gone through, the more different things were discovered in it. Finally, the answers were compared with each other and analyzed. The researcher converted quotations first into Finnish general language and then into English. For the use of quotes, each of the interviewees were given a random code, so the person behind the quotations can be from either company.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore how an organization can strengthen its multicultural competences. The results are based on the interviews carried out in cooperation companies' corporate head offices in Lahti, and occupational titles used are: manager, HR manager, superior, immigrant worker and Finnish worker.

According to interviews, the companies which participated in the research already had a well-established tradition of employing immigrants. Multiculturalism began in both companies in the 1990's, first in the production. An important reason for that was that the managers and the persons who are responsible for the recruitment, had a positive attitude for the employment of immigrants. Many immigrant workers have been in the companies for a long time, some even over 10-15 years and the work communities are used to the fact that multiculturalism is a part of the daily working life. As a superior stated:

The big example has been the management and the owners of the company. They have shown that all are equal, in my opinion, it's great. It has been easy to take it forward and to operate from that basis. (H7)

Concretely, still most immigrants of these two companies are working in the production but the multicultural operations of both companies focus on sales. The companies operate globally and they employ a number of different nationalities. Foreign people almost daily visit in the factories and, for example, sales staff and educators travel abroad. The work is done in multinational teams in cooperation with the foreign subsidiaries.

4.1 Immigrants Entrance to Companies

In the superiors' opinions, the companies have good connections to the education field in the area of Päijät-Häme. One HR manager told that the trainees have come from University of Applied Sciences and job trainees

from secondary schools. Additionally, the two superiors noted that the majority of the immigrant workers of the production have come to the companies through summer jobs or practical training, usually from Salpaus Further Education. Normally, immigrant workers have had several practical training periods and periodic employments before establishing permanent employment.

*I was in the practical training for a month, then in a summer job and after that the contract continues and continues, yes, I had a fixed-term contract three times.
(H3)*

According to the interviewed HR managers, need determines in the recruitment and the most suitable person for the work is sought, irrespective of culture. Everyone is on the same starting line in open recruiting and the same pay policy is followed for everybody. The aim is to offer the work, which corresponds to the profession.

One HR manager said that if the worker does not have an education, s/he will often be employed in the assemblage tasks in the production where certain education is not needed. In tasks, such as welding, professional know-how is required, but it does not matter where the degree was obtained. In production, a condition of employment is a sufficient knowledge of Finnish language. The office personnel with foreign background has come to the companies through an open search for instance via LinkedIn and skill in the English language is required.

When immigrants, both having been employed through the practical training, were asked questions related to recruitment, one said that a worker must be diligent and know languages, a little Finnish. The second opinion was, when employing new workers, that the employers should look for the right person in spite of language.

Skills that are hoped for from immigrant workers appeared in the interviews. Everyone mentioned the language skill. In addition to this, many other ability demands and skill demands came forth. HR managers mentioned that immigrants should express themselves, have self-

confidence and briskness. It is good if they are active, they have some special know-how and they develop their language skills themselves. There can be an advantage from a different culture and language background and more so if they have country contacts or knowledge of different countries. In the future, there is an increasing need for international people who understand international business, are ready to go to work abroad and are able to work in an international environment.

The superiors appreciated good attitude, commitment to the work, understanding the task and mutual flexibility. Basic know-how of the work was mentioned twice. They hoped also work willingness, diligence and that workers would be able to move from one assignment to another. They should have courage to take on new tasks and adapt to them. One manager encouraged immigrants to be brave and that the immigrants would have courage to use Finnish language. Professional and social skills and the ability to cooperate with other people were also mentioned. Related to the skills, one worker said that today's industry work is largely computer-based and the schools do not necessarily have up-to-date tools so that the trainees would cope at work.

4.2 Advantages and Challenges in Multicultural Companies

Like many other workers, one manager said that the international people fit in the work community so well that people don't even think about it in daily life. They are part of the work group and workers don't think of where they have come from. A HR manager continued on the same line, everybody is treated equally and the same way in the work community and the company has had people from different backgrounds so long that no one would think of them as immigrants, but a work mates. This is made possible by the organization's culture in which people are used to doing teamwork with others coming from different countries and cultures.

Speaking about immigrants' advantages, HR manager said that they are committed, happy, helpful and they have a positive attitude. The colleagues appreciated them because they are reliable and do their work

well. The superiors felt that the immigrants are committed to their work, they have brought new points of view and different ways of action. They have made the people compare existing practices and enriched the work community. The immigrants have opened many eyes and increased the tolerance of the work community. They pay more attention to other workers, one manager added. The superiors stated,

It is their commitment, from them one can see it, that when they have a job, so they want to stick to it. There is no need to question, they perform their work, whether they are at work and come as agreed. (H6)

That cordiality what they have, it has done a lot of good for this untalkative Finnish community or group. (H7)

The interviewed immigrants feel comfortable in their work and they have good relations with the colleagues. In their opinion, the attitude to the foreigners is good and they have been equally treated. To one of them, the working environment is Finnish, not multicultural, because among dozens of Finns, a couple of foreigners do not have an effect.

4.2.1 Language Skill

All the interviewees believed that the Finnish language is the most important challenge. Three workers talked even about the language barrier. It affects many separate matters and causes misunderstandings and problems at the workplace.

The immigrant workers said, that at the beginning of the employment, they had fairly poor skill in the Finnish language. They had studied language themselves, at school and on courses. During the working years their language skill has improved. One superior said that the problem is in the fact that the immigrants do not necessarily use Finnish language outside the working hours at all. The other superior added that at work, the immigrants communicate using their own language, not with Finnish language, even if it is extremely important that all workers talk and understand the same language. The superior continued that it is also superiors' responsibility to notice if the immigrants do not understand.

According to HR manager, language skill is not the exclusive problem of immigrants. Even though the language of the companies is English, not all of the workers speak it. The office personnel encounter situations in which the English language and understanding foreign people's spoken English is challenging.

One superior said that the company had been training some people, whose language skill was so bad that the training had to be suspended and according to the other superior, the work interview had been interrupted because the production worker applicant could not speak Finnish and the interviewer did not know English.

The language skill will not only affect employment but also work requirement level. First, the employee is given simple assemblage work and when know-how increases, the job description also will broaden, said two of the superiors.

Of course, the language skill affects how the assignments expand. We have many products in which every order is different, the instructions of the work must be understood and the worker must be able to communicate with the project managers. It requires already a skill of a good Finnish that it goes right. (H6)

The language skill of immigrants has also been a benefit, especially the Russian-speaking individuals, because the office personnel do not have a skill in Russian. Language skills have been useful, for example, when a company is dealing with a Russian and the company's own production worker has been communicating with them in Russian, one manager told. According to a superior, the immigrants act as interpreters in orientation or guidance of the work for those who speak their native language.

In the production there are bright highly-educated workers. Their know-how, the skill in the Russian language can be utilized when Russian guests come to the factory. (H6)

4.2.2 Orientation and Adaption

The companies have their own procedures for the orientation. The orientation of Finns and of immigrants takes place in the same way but the orientation of the immigrants takes more time. A mentor is used and the orientation is facilitated, because there are also foreign mentors and the language barrier is not so pronounced, one of the superiors said.

According to interviews, the production working language is Finnish in both companies. Some of the instructions and documents, including part of the orientation and project material are in Finnish and in English. This can cause challenges for the foreign office personnel, mainly because all the needed orientation material is not translated into English and in the production, some project papers are only in English.

To achieve a successful orientation, the language skill has to be so good that the person becomes properly familiar with things, understands and is able to communicate if a dangerous situation arises, one HR manager said. According to the superiors' words, they were worried about the foreign workers' language skill and understanding because the company has a responsibility for its workers and the protection regulations have to be observed. Four interviewees among the Finnish workers stated that the immigrants have said that they understand, even though they do not.

They say they understand, even if they do not understand, and even though they have been for many years in the building. (H1)

The immigrants told that there were difficulties with language at the beginning.

Particularly the first months, sometimes it pressed a lot, that I do not understand, this is my fault, then I just need to get used to it and try. (H5)

The language skill facilitates communication and adapting to the work community but the adaptation will slow down, if there are many people that come from the same language environment working in the same workstation. They will spend time among themselves and speak their

native language. It can cause negative feelings in others because they do not understand what they are doing and what they are talking about, HR manager told. According to a superior, even if the Finnish workers are doing well in the English language, the worker is accepted into the group better, if s/he has the courage to use the Finnish language. One worker stated,

It will be difficult to be here if you are not able to communicate with others. If we did not have Russians, then it would be still more difficult for him. With whom would he chat here? (H1)

When dealing with cultural differences, in addition to the language, the challenges have been connected to the behavior. Three interviewees mentioned, the Southern European, “more masculine” culture. Particularly the young men workers have raised feelings in the past. The situations have been created when new workers have come and they have looked for their place in the work community. One superior told that it has also been difficult for them to consider the women as equal workers but these conflicts have decreased when the men have grown older and they had been in their work community for a longer time.

The Finn tries to show that they are now here the ones which determine more and the other will, of course, respond to it immediately. (H1)

They are so confrontational, of course it will cause bad blood but the result will be same, where ever you are from, if you behave like that. (H2)

The superiors described workers who have come from the Russia as systematic workers to whom a superior is perhaps a bigger authority than to the Finns but they lack the broad view and more active participation in the development of own work.

The companies strongly react to discrimination or covert discrimination, but it appears less than before, when the immigrants were a new phenomenon in work communities. Usually, this has been in the form of talking behind the back, mainly by the Finns. This was stated both by the immigrants and the majority population. One of the interviewees said, that

there are people in the staff who have racist opinions but they are not made public. According to one superior, there has been name-calling and some situation has also been created during the employer-employee negotiations, in which the Finns had tried to direct the superiors in their choices, but nothing that would have required taking action.

The immigrants told in the interviews, that they have met improper treatment on the job, but very little. They have solved situations with their own attitude, so that they ignore it and forget the matter.

I have really good colleagues and they do not notice at all that I am a foreigner. Racists can be found in every place but not many. (H3)

4.3 Development of Multiculturalism in Companies

The interviewees were asked how multiculturalism has been developed in the companies and is there still something to be developed.

HR manager appreciates understanding international operations and that people develop their international readiness so that they can go to different cultures and get experience with different cultures abroad. No special attention is paid to cultural skills in the recruiting.

A company has tried to take into consideration all the things that can be connected to different cultures and to conflict between cultures. Matters related to equality have been surveyed regularly, one HR manager said. The other HR manager pondered that the company has to think about how people act and how attention can be paid to the fact that in the future, there are more and more people who speak other languages, they have different backgrounds and they come from different cultures. How can the company utilize versatility of different backgrounds? The HR manager continued that everybody should be equipped with basic communication skills, an ability to take care of matters even when people with different background come to the team.

In an immigrant's own words, their language skills are developed at work and now they understand the instructions better. From the worker's point of view, the company should have a technical glossary and matters, which are related to dangerous situations translated from Finnish into English and Russian.

Neither company has arranged education for the staff which is related to multiculturalism. But one manager said that it is good to understand which culture a person comes from because it affects habits. It has been discussed a lot, whether at some stage, this kind of training will be added to the education plan.

Workers have become acquainted with foreigners and their culture through discussions and one of the workers said that their employer has provided financial support to teams for common leisure activities and that he had learned from different cultures when being abroad in the job function. The superiors said that their multicultural know-how has accumulated through experience in a multicultural work community and one of them has developed his multiculturalism skills on his own.

The superiors said that they have had to intervene in discrimination but in the matter in question the issue has been taken forward. Earlier, discrimination appeared more when the first immigrants were employed. Matters related to equality are surveyed regularly and those matters should be discussed more often.

One manager considered, that when a completely new person comes to the company, the company should think about whether the superiors are supported in multicultural skills through education and training. The work community and the immigrant's colleagues must be given instructions and an opportunity to discuss how they experience the matter. A more exact plan should be made on how the immigrant is to be adapted to the company and to the work community.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the whole research process. The research problem and objectives are compared with results and the main outcomes are presented. A list of recommendations for development of multicultural competencies is introduced. The list is based on theory and empirical research. The validity and reliability of the research is estimated and the proposal for further studies is made.

The aim of the study was to examine how an organization can strengthen its multicultural competences. Sub questions clarified how immigrants come to the companies, what kind of challenges are created and how they are solved. Primary research material was the interviews of the workers of the cooperation companies and secondary material in the form of a literary review.

5.1 Key Results and Conclusions

Companies that participated in this study have a long experience in employing immigrants and multiculturalism has been a normal part of the work community since the 1990's. Over the years, multicultural competences have developed mainly through experience. In the work communities, there is regular cooperation and people take each other into consideration, regardless of whether they are foreigners or Finns. Therefore, according to Hofstede's model, the companies can be said to represent feminine enterprise culture dimension. In the model of Bennett, the companies are placed on the stage of ethno-relativism, in which multiculturalism is accepted and appreciated. In the development of multicultural skills and in advancing them inside the company, Jokikokko's model helps in clearly presenting the important development areas: awareness, attitude, action and skills. With the assistance of Brinkmann's and Weerdenburg's model, workers can deepen strategies in intercultural situations.

Expectedly, according to this study, the language skill appeared to be the first important target for development and it affects many separate matters in a work community. Among others, it affects the standard of work, communication, social intercourse, adaptation, orientation and industrial safety. Second, challenges related to different cultures appeared and third, the lack of multicultural education.

5.1.1 Immigrants Entrance to the Work Community

As the earlier studies have stated, language proficiency requirements complicate immigrants' entrance into a work community. All the immigrant workers of production have come through practical training or summer jobs to these companies. The level of the language requirement should be estimated task-specifically and apprenticeship training could also be a way to find employment. Generally, in the studied companies, the immigrants' role is still limited and they concentrate mainly on the tasks of production. Therefore, this study suggest that the companies could pay more attention to the immigrants' earlier education, advancement possibilities as well as to employing them in managerial positions and expert tasks, as far as possible.

The companies participating in this study have offered their staff education in English language but not during the last few years. Education in Finnish language has not been considered necessary, because sufficient Finnish language skill is a precondition for the supply of the work and the worker has to have initiative to develop language skill if there are shortcomings in it. Language skill is to the common advantage of all and in addition to independent-study, the companies could support the workers' language skill acquisition. For example, the companies could offer Finnish language training to the immigrant workers and English language training to the Finnish workers.

5.1.2 Multicultural Work Community

The research results showed that the work communities meet challenges related to cultural differences. According to Hofstede model, masculine behavior, which has occurred in the studied companies, is based on cultural Power Distance dimension. Superiors wished for more initiative from immigrant workers. According to Yli-Kaitala et al., in some cultures, it can feel strange that the employee is expected to have the initiative and actively acquire information. Initiative can potentially be viewed as rebellion or ignoring the leader. This is related to Hofstede's Uncertainty and Avoidance dimension. It also affects, for example, employer-employee negotiations. The Finnish workers also wondered, why the immigrant workers said that they understand what was said, even though they did not. According to Juuti, the immigrants experience that they must pretend to understand what is said, otherwise their job is threatened. The identification of culture differences and the practicing of multiculturalism competences could reduce challenges and facilitate in solving them. Therefore, it would be useful to include development of multicultural skills into corporate training plans and these competences should be appreciated as part of other professional skill.

In the companies which participated in the study, everyone is orientated in the same way and some of the orientation instructions are only in Finnish or in English language. Immigrants' individual needs should be taken into account in the orientation. This study suggests that at least, the orientation instructions, particularly occupational safety and health material should be translated and written in plain language, perhaps even illustrated. Personal training and mentoring should be offered for the immigrant workers, if needed. Adequate time and support must be reserved for the orientation. In addition, the immigrant could be helped by means of mentoring to get wider understanding of Finnish work culture. Superiors would benefit from having sufficient language skills, for example, when the worker has to be orientated in English. It was noted positively that the companies use mentors in orientation, also foreign mentors, if there are difficulties with Finnish language. In addition to the orientation, the

immigrants' language skill has also been utilized in other tasks, when the company does business with Russians, for example, Russian language skill is found from inside the company.

It turned out that immigrant workers are treated in the same way as the workers of the original population, also in other connections than in orientation. Therefore, according to Sippola, attention should be paid to immigrants' individual needs. Among others, in recruiting, in evaluation and rewarding of the work. And in addition to this, according to Jokikokko, the people should be seen as individuals, not only as a representative of certain culture.

In the studied companies, most superiors have a year's experience in managing the multicultural work community. Multicultural skills are developed through their own experience and by learning in the workplace. Superiors could be supported by offering them education and practical tools for the management of a multicultural work community, and how they should act in challenging situations. Employees are also expected to learn multicultural competences abroad but according to Piekkari, multicultural know-how often remains superficial and they do not really integrate into the culture of the target country at all because they easily spend time among other foreigners.

In this research, it became apparent that the companies did not really promote becoming acquainted with other nationalities. The ETMO-research showed that, for example, the common leisure, party and evening gatherings between majority population and immigrants developed workers' multiculturalism. The ETMO-research found that management should give sufficient resources for the development of multiculturalism and do it in good co-operation with staff.

According to Sippola, development of multiculturalism requires systematic management and integration of multiculturalism into the mission, vision and strategy of the company. In Piekkari's terms, the executive teams of these cooperation companies could be referred to as international, in

which there is an enhanced perception of language and cultural differences but multiculturalism is hardly seen in the strategies of the companies. The fact is, that the sales team is international and there the strategy is a conscious choice. To get the best possible added value from multiculturalism, the companies could develop a global diversity strategy including multiculturalism and it should also be diligently followed.

5.2 Recommendations for Development of Multicultural Competences

A list of recommendations is made for all companies wanting to develop and to benefit from a multicultural organization. It is based on both earlier studies and the results of this research work.

- Management should commit itself to the development of multiculturalism and take it as a part of the mission, vision and strategy of the company.
- Companies should find the courage to change management practices and management styles and support systematic development of multiculturalism.
- Clear targets should be set for development of multiculturalism and monitor the implementation of plans.
- The whole company should develop multiculturalism together. Work community should be motivated to develop multicultural skills and learn about differences.
- Everyone should have equal opportunities and be treated equally. Zero tolerance must be set on discrimination.
- Attention should be paid to the workers' individual needs and people must be seen as individuals, not only as a representative of a certain culture.
- Good orientation should be organized for foreigners: enough time, good material in their own language and mentors should be available to ensure the understanding of the message.
- Staff should receive education on different cultures, languages and manners.

5.3 Validity and Reliability

The research questions represented the objectives of OSSI-project. Analysis of the research results is based on theory, literature and earlier studies. The theories chosen for the study supported the research seamlessly. The theme interview was a suitable method for the research and a clear choice for getting the needed research information. The interview questions were tested before the interviews. The accuracy of the questions is reflected by the fact, that all the answers were connected to predetermined themes.

The research results were carefully compared with the knowledge-base and the results verify earlier studies well. The results of the research show how multiculturalism occurs in the cooperation companies, how they have already developed their multiculturalism and how to still improve skills. At the end of the study, a concrete list of recommendations was put together, directed to all the companies, to develop and strengthen the multicultural competences of the companies.

Interviews were carried out at the interviewees' workplaces and they participated in the interviews voluntarily. The interviewees were ten people who are in different positions, sampling from every hierarchy rank. It gave different points of view and comprehensive information about the research topic. The interviewees seemed honest in their answers, but for some questions they did not want to answer and then they answered something else or said that s/he was the wrong person to answer the question. The interviewees' own interpretation of the questions and the fact that the companies were allowed to choose the interviewees could affect the reliability of the answers. On the other hand, the interviewees answered often in the same way, which increases the reliability of the results.

Because the research questions were well designed, very little unnecessary material accumulated from the interviews and word-for-word

transcription increased reliability. The quotations were translated into English but the meaning of the contents of quotations has not been changed. Only Finnish language nuances reduced due to the translation.

The researcher will have influence on different stages of research: to choose and interpret concepts, collection and analysis and reporting of the material (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 18). Because the interviewer is not a professional interviewer and English is not her native language, the interviewer's own choices, selective memory and the translation of the text could also have affected reliability. There can be shortcomings in the linguistic form of the study and in the translations.

The interviewer had difficulties in maintaining a neutral role without feeling rude. In some points, the interviewer was asking a new question, before the interviewee had finished his answer, and because of this, the interviewer may have lost a few interesting answers. According to Hirsijärvi & Hurme, when an attempt is to achieve a natural and uninhibited discussion, the interviewer should be able to act without paper and pen. The themes should be known by heart so that there would be no need for the browsing of papers. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 92.) Sometimes, the interviewer's concentration was interrupted because she had to browse her papers. According to the advance information, the interviewer assumed that all the interviewees speak and understand Finnish but the other interviewed immigrant had a bit weak language skill. Some question was not understood or understood in the opposite way it was intended, even though the matter was presented in many different ways. Therefore, the interviewer may have interpreted answers incorrectly.

The interviewed personal data has not been saved and the original interview material has only been confidentially used by the interviewer and nobody else has seen the material or handled it. To protect anonymity, the interview recordings were destroyed after the interviews had been transcribed. The interview answers can be checked at any time, likewise the researcher's interpretations can be estimated again because the interviews are transcribed on paper.

5.4 Further Study

The companies participating in this study already had a long experience in operating in a multicultural working environment. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study, in companies where few immigrants have been employed. Another interesting option would be the possibility to design, together with a company, how the first immigrant workers would be received, what possible operations it would require and how the process would be implemented.

Because multiculturalism of companies is essentially dependent on foreign people, the research also aroused the interest to study human resources management further. How could multiculturalism be promoted in systematic recruiting? How is multiculturalism seen in operations and strategy?

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The theme questions

IMMIGRANT'S ENTRANCE TO WORK COMMUNITY

What makes the company multicultural?

How is multiculturalism seen in the daily working?

How are immigrants employed in the companies?

WORKING IN MULTICULTURAL WORK COMMUNITY

How are immigrants oriented?

What are the immigrants' strengths?

What skills would the immigrants need?

What matters cause challenges?

How are the challenges solved?

DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURAL COMPANY

What is required of the management in the multicultural work community?

How is multiculturalism supported in the company?

How are the multiculturalism skills of the staff developed?