The Impact of Effective Leadership on Multicultural Project Teams

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I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of Master of Business Administration (Project Management) is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to identify the impact of effective leadership on multicultural project teams. To examine this topic, a literature review of current literature was completed. The literature was supported by primary research which was analysed by conducting interviews with senior leaders and managers working with multicultural project team members. The sample was characterised by a significant number of diverse respondents between the ages of 27 to 60. The interviews yielded seven principles for effective leadership in the managing of multicultural team members. It was identified that leadership is a topic which includes aspects from a range of organisational responsibilities, the ability to select suitable team members and approaches for leading multicultural project teams. The analysis showed that cross-cultural transformational leadership was the most effective type of management for multicultural teams. In summary, effective leadership, which is characterised by the seven principles has a direct impact on multicultural project teams and their performance.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The business world is driven by rising globalisation. International markets are increasing despite certain tendencies to national boundaries and the increase of tariffs. Cross-cultural cooperation is becoming an everyday business for organisations. All business activities in global markets, in the area of innovation, strategy concepts, or organisational changes are executed by projects and associated project management approaches (Bubel, 2015). The fact that more organisations are either transforming from national to multinational players or are entering partnerships globally is influencing existing project management theories and critical challenges are arising (Abyad, 2017). This transition has created new team compositions. For organisations, the aim of a team is still to have a valuable resource by working together efficiently no matter which heritage the team members derive from (Bubel, 2015). Multinational corporations are seeing chances to generate competitive advantages through combining different knowledge and perspectives to push innovations with selected individuals from different geographic regions (Rodrigues and Sbragia, 2013). Otherwise, some cross-border projects automatically have international team members even if it was not strategically planned by an organisation. As Büll et al. (2019) mentions, once a project is classified as an international one, the complexity and risk increases. Reasons can be due to different geographic locations or misunderstandings in communication. The cultural differences between international team members also generate risks which are hardly assessable in the project planning phase (Büll et al., 2019). The different environmental impacts such as culture, social, political and technological must be studied carefully (PMI, 2017). Studies have shown that 40 to 70 percent of international projects fail and often are associated with a lack of knowledge due to cultural differences (Thomas et al., cited in Büll et al., 2019). These differences are characterised by varying beliefs, values and behaviours and the organisation that its managers must be aware of (Büll et al., 2019). This shows that culture is a critical factor in global projects which is the reason why this research paper will focus on the value of a multicultural team.

As Beeth (1997) discovered out in his early research, there is a vast difference between monocultural and multicultural. It is about the people and how they are able to adapt their behaviour in the different environments. This adaptability is a new skill that project
managers and team members have to both bring into modern project management environments. Multicultural is not only about speaking different languages or being aware of legal circumstances in a country, it is also about the culture and the social complexity of others (Büll et al., 2019).

Given the fact that a project team is the heart of any development, a closer look at people’s abilities and proficiency is required. The responsibility of leading the team successfully through the project lifecycle relies on the project manager (Serrador et al., 2018). Today’s project managers need to be able to adapt the leadership style and to “commit to the new culture on a deeper, emotional level” (Beeth, 1997). Diversity in multicultural teams are creating a higher risk for conflicts which leads to poor project performance (Marquart and Horvarth, cited in Fadhul, 2017). According to Gehrke and Claes (2014, p. 1), even though multicultural management is a well-researched topic, managers today do not know how to act when problems or conflicts occur. The most important aspect for managers is to act proactively to avoid any critical situations that are associated with the suitable leadership style.
As the business environment and the cultural diversity of project team members have changed it is absolutely essential that the project manager is able to change and adapt their leadership to modern circumstances. As a result, being conscious of multicultural characteristics, creating an atmosphere that facilitates teamwork, and selecting, as well as executing an effective leadership style will help determine the success or failure of a project (Nagendra and Farooqui, 2016).

1.2. Research Question

The following research question was formulated for this study:

How is the impact of effective leadership on multicultural project teams?

1.3. Rationale of the Current Study and Aims

Companies and project teams are constantly facing multicultural challenges that results in conflicts. Consequently, a tense atmosphere and lower motivation can lead to
delays, an increase of costs and drastically reduces the quality of work. A multicultural project is characterised for a higher risk to fail (Büll et al., 2019). The responsibility lies on the manager who needs to find a correct approach in leading the multicultural team to be able to meet the challenges. Project managers need to achieve project success and have to be able to manage each kind of teams as this can be a critical success factor (Serrador et al., 2018). Therefore, the idea of this research project is to examine the significance of leadership in multicultural teams and to analyse principles that help managers to lead their teams effectively. This study examined how team compositions changed from monocultural to multicultural and how it influenced managers. The primary research of this study was to gather information from managers who are confronted by their daily business with multicultural teams. They have experience with problems that occur and have tried approaches to avoid such issues. By collecting this first-hand data in combination with existing research, this research study will provide approaches on how to lead multicultural teams effectively. This study also aims to help organisations and managers in handling multicultural project teams. There is a collection of research about leadership in a multicultural team and the global economy, published by Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018), Gehrke and Claes (2014) or Kuesten (2013). And research by Büll et al. (2019), Abyad (2017) and Huang (2016) that presented the characteristics and challenges of multicultural teams. However, there has been no research found which directly analyses the relationship of effective leadership and multicultural project teams. The hypothesis examined by this study is that effective leadership has a direct impact on multicultural project teams.

1.4. Dissertation Structure

This study has five main chapters. The introduction includes background information and presents the aim of this research study. Chapter two provides a review of existing research about the change from mono- to multicultural teams. It also highlights the aligned challenges, leadership in multicultural teams and project success in general. Chapter three focuses on the methodology of this research project. The reasons for the chosen research design are explained and the sample, ethical considerations, limitations and the data
analysis are described. Chapter four provides the findings of the primary research and links it with the appropriate literature. Lastly, the final chapter presents the discussion for this research project and gives recommendations for future research.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The literature review will give an understanding about different theories and frameworks that current literature is providing related to this research topic. Saunders et al. (2015, p. 72) describes literature review as a critical analysis of other people’s finding and a meaningful connection of already gathered information. Relevant data are taken mostly from most recent academic journals and books.

Based on the research question, the following literature review will examine the variables and will identify already existing knowledge about this topic. First, the change from monocultural to multicultural project team composition and its reasons will be identified. As this change brings several challenges for managers, the second part will discuss the major challenges in multicultural project teams which could occur during the process lifecycle. The third theme will examine the leadership of multicultural teams and will show different approaches. Besides leadership, the importance of emotional intelligence and teamwork in the multicultural context will be analysed as well. All of these analysed approaches have the goal to achieve project success. Therefore, the last theme will discuss project success and the difficulties in defining it.

Figure 1 shows a summary of the research model for the literature review.

![Figure 1: Research Model](image-url)
2.2. Change from only Monocultural to Mono- and Multicultural Project Teams

Globalisation is rising due to the pressure from technology, emerging and converging markets, customer demands, and product development. An additional consequence of globalisation is that individuals are moving to foreign countries to live and work (Gehrke and Claerk, 2014, p. 87). Apart from other challenges related to globalisation, organisations have to deal with cultural diversity in today’s project teams and multicultural teamwork has become common business (Ochieng and Price, 2009). Global projects are defined as projects which take place in more than one country and are therefore multicultural projects (Rodrigues and Sbragia, 2013).

Organisations are seeing multicultural teams as a chance for innovation to achieve competitive advantage. However, Lane and Di Stefano (1992) already pointed out that “the approach to diversity and not the diversity itself determines the actual positive and negative outcomes”. Cultural diversity offers a huge opportunity for organisations to increase innovations, but the management has to control that it will be used efficiently (Gassmann, 2001).

The literature distinguishes between monocultural and multicultural behaviour of people. Multicultural projects usually have a higher complexity than monocultural ones due to an increased number of stakeholders who are from different countries and the different geographic locations are connected with an increasing cultural diversity (Büll et al., 2019). According to Beeth (1997), monocultural people are able to study different cultures but are not able to actually live them emotionally. It is not about learning superficial behaviour, multicultural people understand culture on a psychological level, which is more important than speaking a foreign language perfectly (Beeth, 1997).

Büll et al. (2019) highlights that there is also a difference in multicultural and international projects. International projects focus more on the obvious characteristics such as language, whereas, multicultural is a deeper understanding and commitment to other beliefs and behaviours.

Multicultural teams are usually compiled randomly and do not have any existing identity where teamwork and team behaviour can be established (Fadhul, 2017). Therefore, trusting
and open communication among every team member is the recipe for success of multicultural teams (Fadhul, 2017).

2.3. Challenges of Multicultural Projects

2.3.1. Organisational structure

Organisations of different industries have different structures, organisations of the same industry can have varying structures, and even within an organisation the structures can be different depending on the location (Mintzberg, 2016). Rodrigues and Sbragia (2013) state that project managers are eventually facing different organisational structures within global projects. Project team member working together from the same organisation but different countries can have totally different organised internal structures. Mintzberg (2016) has identified in previous years several different types of structures which depend on the characteristics of an organisation or the forces that shape them. There is no right organisational structure, but a strong structure aligns with the features of the organisation. A project manager’s challenge is to identify each structure and to establish a communication plan which reaches every stakeholder promptly and successfully. When it comes to the structure of organisations, Jacob (2007) suggests that especially in multicultural projects different structures should be tried and applied which are influenced from other cultures. This approach requests a certain flexibility in the organisation. Trying new management approaches can help to overcome global challenges. According to Miller et al. (2000), organisations must be aware about the role of their project management and it has to be clear that project goals are different to organisational goals. Projects help to improve procedures or to execute strategies to reach the organisational objectives. Further, it is important to know where the global project is settled within the organisation to be aware of the allocated capabilities (Wilson and Doz, 2012). According to Wilson and Doz (2012), independent from the organisational structure, an atmosphere of trust, loyalty and empathy must be transported and lived to project members. This atmosphere has to be communicated top-down from the management level. Project managers and their team need to be able to focus on their projects to perform properly and distracting matters are not helpful. Resources need to be available in an appropriate way and management needs to understand that global projects might have a bigger impact on resources in terms of
workload for each project member (Wilson and Doz, 2012). Therefore, multicultural projects have to be planned differently compared to monocultural projects. The higher capacity on resources must be recognised and provided by the management.

2.3.2. Culture

As the word multicultural says, it has a strong alignment with different cultures. Culture and its differences are a topic which is widely observed by consisting literature. But as Abyad (2017) states, when it comes to project management cultural differences are one of the least known topics. According to Büll et al. (2019), culture can be defined in a lot of different ways, but they see culture as an orientation system. Every culture has certain beliefs, values and behaviours which are all summarized in the orientation system. Culture is practiced in different ethnic groups (Nagayama Hall, 2016) and therefore, cultures are not only varying from country to country, they can be different from region to region (Fadhul, 2017).

Hofstede (1983) states that even organisations have different cultures which can be distinguished in different categories as shown in figure 2. The cultural background of an organisation is always related to the country where it is operating. Hofstede’s model is an assistance in understanding a culture to be able to deal and manage the included people. For instance, project teams are newly created and compiled for every project. This is easier to handle for a culture with high individualism as they have less problems working together with an unfamiliar group (Rodrigues and Sbragia, 2013). Hofstede’s model is not a solution for occurring cultural issues, but it helps managers in understanding the other attitude and makes it easier to handle.
Cultural differences can be very challenging for organisations and project managers. Misunderstandings, communication issues, wrong behaviour and others can easily lead to inefficient and unsatisfying project performance (Fadhul, 2017). As Abyad (2017) states, cultural differences are a very critical factor in multicultural projects and can have a direct impact on the success or failure of projects. However, cultural diversity offers the chance of creating synergies (Büll et al., 2019) by using different competencies and working together to generate competitive advantages for the organisation (Stahl and Brannen, 2013). According to Abyad (2017), the cultural synergy produces an extremely high level of innovative thinking for problem solutions or product development. Culture in projects is a huge challenge for every project team but managing it properly can lead to unexpected success.

2.3.3. Communication and language

Communication is providing necessary information about the project to the respective people on time (Büll et al., 2019). According to Ochieng and Price (2009), the degree of risk in communication is especially increased in global projects because misunderstandings or misinterpretations between stakeholders can occur easily.
Gehrke and Claes (2014, p. 51) highlight that language is often the main barrier in between cultures. A corporate language or project language is mandatory which is most likely English. However, organisations cannot expect that English is spoken in every country, as in several countries only the higher social classes are able to speak it (Abyad, 2017). This complicates the situation for a project manager, as he is dependent on translators which make the situation even more difficult. Negotiations or critical conversations are more complicated in different languages (Abyad, 2017). Even if the common project language is English, it does not mean that everyone can speak it on the same level. This can lead to loss of efficiency and knowledge especially because some team members might not be confident enough to share it in another language (Ochieng and Price, 2009). Therefore, it is a project manager’s responsibility to create a communication strategy so that everyone has the same level of information. Büll et al. (2019) emphasizes in this context the ability of listening and asking questions to get all necessary information from everyone. According to Tewari (2015), there are easy tools to face the difficulties of languages. For example, have video conference rather than normal phone calls, as this gives the option to see facial impressions and helps to avoid misunderstandings. Critical communication should be done personally, and the outcomes should be documented (Wilson and Doz, 2012).

In addition, as Abyad (2017) states, communication differs in different cultures as well. The use of body language varies from country to country and can be easily misunderstood. Expressions or body language can have different meanings in different cultures (Tewari, 2015). Communication also varies based upon how well people know each other, age, gender and personal preferences (Gehrke and Claes, 2014, p. 68). Further, the way of communicating with each other is brings up another challenge for the project manager, as some cultures communicate very directly, others indirectly. Not being able to communicate accurately in a multicultural project might lead to offending counterparts and ends up in conflict and project failure (Abyad, 2017). A multicultural project manager must be an excellent communicator who is adaptable to the sense of communicating in different cultures.
2.4. Importance and Influence of Leadership on Multicultural Projects

Research has created a lot of different leadership models and approaches over the years. All of them have their strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for criticism (Pretorius et al., 2018). Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) have described very early the difference in either leading autocratic or democratic. According to their research, a leader must evaluate the external forces and the social environment and must be aware of the necessary degree of freedom for subordinates. Based on that information, a leadership direction must be picked.

According to Pretorius et al. (2018) leadership is a critical success factor for any project. In the past, leadership was considered as a classic top-down approach which means leading by one individual which is characterised by servant leadership style. This has been changed to a mixture of official and unofficial leaders along a process (Pearce et al., 2014). Today leadership is more about to “transform organisational practices, structures and interdependencies” (Pretorius et al., 2018).

To understand what leadership means, it is necessary to really know its characteristics and to differentiate it from the term of management. Management is the ability to create structure and consistency whereas leadership is more focussed on change and movement in an organisation (Pretorius et al., 2018).

Pretorius et al. (2018) points out that leadership does not work without established management, and management does not work without effective leadership. As Watson (1983) already stated, the success of an organisation is the skill of combining leadership and management effectively. Project managers are usually appointed with appropriate power to be able to execute as leaders as well as managers (Müller et al., 2017).

2.4.1. Leadership in project management

In projects the main leadership role is taken over by the project manager and it is therefore traditionally a vertical approach which means that it is top-down leadership with all responsibility being held by the project manager (Pretorius et al., 2018). More current research has shown that in the connection of leadership and project management these traditional approaches should not be used (Pretorius et al., 2018). Leadership in projects is
very different. Projects are characterized as very agile due to the high risk that is aligned and the changes of external circumstances and in the project scope. Changes are normal throughout the project lifecycle and must be managed. Therefore, as Prabhakar (2005) argues, there is not one leadership style which can be applied in each project. His research says that a project manager needs to be flexible in the use of different leadership styles for the appropriate situation. The research of Cunningham et al. (2015) says that the style of leadership is decided by the project manager and cannot be predefined by the organisation. However, as research has been identified and has been also shown in this paper, the project manager should choose a leadership style which aligns with the organisational structure as well as culture.

Current research mentions that it is useful to select project managers based on their leadership and technical skills to match the project needs (Müller and Turner, 2010). The research of Müller and Turner (2010) also highlights the strong relationship in between leadership and project success. Pretorius (2018) claims that today project managers are evaluated more on their technical skills than on their leadership skills. When the organisation selects a team, it is necessary to know the skills of each project manager and which skills lead to success of a project. According to Müller and Turner (2010), it clearly depends on the project type and the sector the project is moving in, to see what kind of skills are necessary. They have differentiated skills in three different qualities: Intellectual, managerial and emotional. Carvalho et al. (2015) adds that leaders who are equipped with a high degree of soft skills are able to create a personal relationship to their employees easier than others independent from the project type. Further, soft skills are a factor in leadership which has a direct influence on project success or failure (Carvalho et al., 2015).

Kuesten (2013) highlights the importance of leaders to create personal relationship with team members. This skill is a lot more difficult in international projects but is even more important in this context. A good leader of multicultural projects must be very adaptable. As Pretorius et al. (2017) states, a project manager needs to have the ability to feel which leadership style is appropriate for each project phase and then change it accordingly during the project.

In project management the literature often distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership. According to Tyssen et al. (2014), transactional leadership is a
task-oriented approach whereas transformational is more people oriented. The selection depends on the project managers favoured leadership style on the one hand and on the other hand, the type of project.

2.4.2. Multicultural teams

There are a lot of different leadership styles which all have varying characteristics for leading people (Pretorius et al., 2017). As described before, multicultural teams have very special attributes and it is important to find a solution to lead and deal with them. According to Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018), a leadership style needs to align with different factors such as the people, organisation and the culture. Especially in multicultural projects the leadership has to focus on the people to build up a working relationship with them (Turner and Müller, 2005). In the global context, transformational leadership is an often-called concept in current research. This leadership style is a proactive approach of creating an environment where employees become inspired and innovative and the atmosphere is not necessarily aligned with the organisational culture, it is adapted (Gehrke and Claes, 2014, p. 133). The study of Prabhakar (2005) shows that transformational leadership is characterized by minimized authority and the high influence of individuals. The behaviour of this leadership style has a positive influence on project success (Aga et al., 2016). Transformational Leadership also enhances the team communication and has a positive impact on teamwork (Yang et al., 2011).

Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018) are highlighting the cross-cultural leadership as another effective approach to handle modern multicultural teams. It focuses on the knowledge and sensitivity of a manager in relation to other culture (Sohn, cited in Bonsu and Twum-Danso, 2018). This approach is about openness understanding other cultures and being able to communicate accurately in this multicultural ambiance (Bonsu and Twum-Danso, 2018). However, the combination of transformational and cross-cultural leadership might be the most appropriate approach for leading multicultural teams. It is about understanding the characteristics of different cultures while empowering and motivating the team to achieve the best outcome (Bonsu and Twum-Danso, 2018). For a better understanding, figure 3 shows the composition of the identified leadership styles.
Coherent with the leadership styles, Huang (2016) highlights a concept of harmony for leading multicultural teams. It consists of expertise, empathy and cultural competence. A project manager needs to be equipped with skills in these three fields to be able to deal with multicultural challenges. Another ability a project manager in a multicultural environment should bring is flexibility. As already mentioned before, usual projects are already very agile and changes are common business. The higher risk of cross-cultural projects and the fast-moving environment automatically requires a high level of flexibility from the project managers to be able to keep a clear head for successful decision making (Ochieng et al., 2013).

To be an effective multicultural leader it is always mentioned that the key is to understand people across cultures. The Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study examined the correlation in between cultures and suitable leadership models (Gehrke and Claes, 2014, p. 135). The GLOBE study is based on the findings of Hofstede and helps managers to evaluate and compare different countries’ or regions’ culture to find the most effective leadership model as well as the importance and value of leadership in this area (Munley, 2011).
2.4.3. Emotional intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capability of gathering and processing information of emotions about others and yourself (Mayer and Salovey cited in Konanahalli and Oyedele, 2016). Goleman (1996) who popularized the term of EI, divided it in five categories: Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

It is a manager’s task to maximize an employee’s performance. Emotions have a direct input on performance, therefore a manager needs to be aware of the emotions of himself as well as the individual (Preston et al., 2015). As Baesu (2018) mentions, it is not only about being aware of emotions it is necessary to manage emotions successfully. This can be done by either providing guidance to use emotions purposeful for the project objective or to offer solutions processes for each individual problem or general assistance (Ochieng et al., 2013). Different leadership styles today are strongly connected with the ability of EI (Baesu, 2018). According to Baesu (2018) the best leaders are the ones who are able to interact with their team members and can create an excellent team atmosphere. The role of EI in this matter is increasing constantly. It needs to be considered that the workforce has changed. Today an authoritarian leadership is mostly not accepted anymore and EI is providing the managers different options of respectful leadership (Baesu and Bejinaru, 2015).

The ability to perceive another’s thoughts and feelings is often associated with empathy. Empathy is about the feeling of caring about others and especially to understand why a person is in need (Duff, 2017). According to Pathak (2019), empathy helps leaders especially in building trustful relationship to their employees. Also, people who have a high degree of empathy are able to interact better in a multicultural environment because they can faster pick up different cultural behaviours (Pathak, 2019). Several research studies have examined whether empathy can be learned or not. Even though there is still a lot of research ongoing, such as the impact of gender differences on empathy, Duff (2017) mentions that by training and personal experiences it is possible to improve empathy.
People who are equipped with the skill of EI naturally can be lucky, but there is still a chance that by training, reflecting experiences, and also an increasing age that EI can be improved for everyone (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2013).

EI has a high priority in the before mentioned transformational leadership style which is focused rather on results than activities (Leban und Zulauf, 2004). Motivation can be used more targeted when the employee’s needs are identified and the emotional awareness helps to guide them to the claimed results.

The complexity of emotions, beliefs and feelings is higher in multicultural teams. Therefore, it is even more important for managers to contribute emotional intelligence to cross-cultural project teams (Sharma et al., 2017). When people work in multicultural teams and do not have a good knowledge about certain cultures they often rely on stereotypes, which usually do not help in understanding and leading people (Miller et al., 2000). Stereotypes lead people to make assumptions about personal attitudes prematurely instead of getting to know the counterpart on an emotional level. This emphasizes the importance of EI in multicultural teams because it is important to learn about every individual and its personal characteristics and not to classify a whole group.

As stated before, communication is a major challenge in multicultural teams. Misunderstandings can happen quite easily. Part of EI is to listen between the lines to understand the meaning of a statement correctly which has an even higher significance in multicultural conversations (Baesu and Bejinaru, 2015). It appears that EI is an ability that modern project managers need to have and it does not matter what kind of project it is. However, the relevance of applying EI in multicultural teams is even higher because the importance of the interactive relationship to individuals has an important influence to lead the project to success.

2.4.4. Teamwork

Besides choosing the right leadership style, teamwork can have a direct impact on project success as well (Syed Muhammad Javed Iqbal et al., 2017). Organisations expect from groups of people to develop ideas and innovations to solve their problems and to
reach their objectives (Gehrke and Claes, 2014, p. 119). There are three factors which are relevant to teamwork:

Syed Muhammad Javed Iqbal et al. (2017) states that communication within the team is the basis for well-established teamwork. As a second factor the collaboration within the team must be considered as it strengthens the relationship (Thamhain, cited in Syed Muhammad Javed Iqbal et al., 2017). According to Yang et al. (2013), the team cohesiveness and collaboration also have direct input on team performance. The performance of teams should be measured on these three mentioned factors (Yang et al. (2013).

Huiling Ding and Xin Ding (2008) state that, the carefully planned implementation of project management tools and techniques supports teamwork within projects, because they follow certain processes and facilitate the general collaboration in the team. Besides these tools, the atmosphere of teamwork is strongly associated with the leadership style. Managers who are able to follow transformational leadership will most likely improve all four factors of teamwork (Yang et al., 2011).

According to Jones (2008), to create a proper teamwork atmosphere it is necessary to first evaluate the internal and external obstacles before introducing initiatives for projects. This needs to be done for each project individually, as they all have different obstacles. Cultural diversity can be an enormous obstacle to implement a good atmosphere of teamwork.

The study by Yang et al. (2011) shows that team collaboration has a higher impact on project performance and success in international projects as opposed to local projects. Additionally, projects with high complexity are more likely to be successful when teamwork is established (Yang et al., 2011). As seen before in this literature review, global projects are characterised by high complexity due to the multicultural stakeholders, high uncertainty and aligned risks and challenges. Therefore, teamwork can be defined as a critical success factor for multicultural teams.

Further, creation of a well working teamwork atmosphere will have a positive influence on the project performance in all different categories such as cost, schedule and quality (Yang et al., 2011).

According to Syed Muhammad Javed Iqbal et al. (2017), the organisation needs to realize the importance of teamwork in projects. If they understand that teamwork contributes to
successful projects they will allocate project managers and the team accordingly so that teamwork can be accomplished. Wilson and Doz (2012) criticises that in reality teams are selected too often due to their availability instead of their matching skills. Additionally, managers need to realise the different roles that individuals take in a team. Belbin (1996) has identified nine different roles which are classified as action-, people- and cerebral-oriented. A team which consists of a good combination of these roles will perform efficiently. However, it needs to be considered which roles are more important than others for each team, because the absence of a role does not automatically lead to less efficiency (Belbin, 1996).

2.5. Project Success

According to Abyad (2018), it is very important for every project manager to be aware of what the stakeholders and the management in particular consider as project success. Only if the factors for success are clarified in the project planning phase, can the project be finished successfully. According to different literature, there are several approaches on how to evaluate the success of a project and these approaches also have changed through time. Atkinson (1999) defined the “The Iron Triangle”, which consists of time, cost, and quality as the perfect measurement of success (figure 4). Later the PMI (2017) created a development of this theory and called it “The Competing Triangle”, by including risk, value, and image/reputation to the framework (figure 5). The distribution of the different categories depends on the project complexity.

![Figure 4: The Iron Triangle](source: Atkinson (1999))
Based on these two triangle theories, Kerzner (2013) illustrates that categories need to be set which are relevant to the project success. This means for each category which is deemed necessary for success, a most meaningful measure needs to be determined. An even more recent theory is illustrated by Serrador et al. (2018) with the construct of climate for project success. This framework describes budget/time and stakeholder satisfaction as success and shows the relation to the success factors which are top management support, sufficient resources and willingness to adapt (Serrador et al., 2018). This is shown in figure 6. The factor of resources is mostly connected to the performance of the team. This shows that Serrador et al. (2018) provides the only theoretical framework which considers people as a critical success factor in projects.
Research by Rezvani and Khosravi (2018) divides project success factors and project management success in two different categories. Project management success factors are related to frameworks such as “The Iron Triangle” which were described before. This can be measured and evaluated after project completion. However, project success factors are referring to team performance and stakeholder satisfaction and can be measured continuously throughout the project.

To determine project success in an organisation, projects must be first classified concerning the project duration. Depending on this, relevant success factors need to be identified for each project individually (Rezvani and Khosravi, 2018). Responsibility for this classification falls to the project manager, who also has the general responsibility for project success. He needs to be aware what is critical in the project. Depending on how he executes his role and manages all of the critical success factors, the project will either succeed or fail. Saadé (2015) states that the ability to communicate at multiple levels is the most important aspect for a project manager in handling critical success factors. Every related stakeholder needs to be aware of occurring obstacles, because a project manager himself is usually not able to fix it by himself.

All of the different theories that the literature provides are options as to how an organisation can measure and evaluate its project success. But the project manager needs to be aware what the critical success factors of the project are.
3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The literature review has already provided a lot of information and theories which help to understand the research topic. Additionally, it is planned to provide more in-depth information through primary research. The methodology section gives an overview how this research study was carried out. First the sample of participants will be described. Second, the research design will describe the approach as to how data is collected and analysed. Afterwards, the material and the procedure will be described and ethical considerations will be discussed. Finally, the approach of analysing the research data will be described in detail.

3.2. Participants

For this study, managers are found who have global and multicultural project experience. Since it is not realistic to take every relevant person into consideration for the primary research, a non-probability sampling will be used (Saunders, 2015, p. 295). This approach will allow the author to use judgemental sampling (purposive sampling). Based on this, the sample can be selected by justification of who fits best for the research study. As Saunders (2015, p. 301) states, purposive sampling is used if samples are very informative. The author of this research has several years of work experience as a project manager and feels confident to choose the sampling based on his justification. The available network of managers is an appropriate sample for this research topic. The author will use heterogeneous sampling, which means that one subgroup will be picked where all members have a variety of characteristics (Saunders, 2015, p. 302). The subgroup will consist of managers with multicultural project experience from all genders, different generations, and countries. Specifically the age range from 27 to 60 years will be used, and the diversity of the participants will give the opportunity to examine differences and connections in leadership and teamwork styles of multicultural project teams.

Saunders (2015, p. 297) recommends a sample size of 5-25 for semi-structured/in-depth interviews and a sample size of 12-30 for considering a heterogeneous population.
The author of this research topic plans to conduct 10 semi-structured interviews for the heterogeneous population.

All of the participants were taking part out of their willingness to contribute and support to this research study and did this voluntarily.

3.3. Design

Primary research is a main part in this research study. This part will describe the design of the research how information will be gathered to answer the research question. Saunders and Lewis (2018) created the research onion which helps to identify the steps through the research process. The description of the research design for this study is orientated on the research onion (figure 7).

![Research Onion](Source: Saunders and Lewis, 2018)
3.3.1. Research philosophy

Research philosophy is the approach of how the research data is gathered and analysed. It is based on the beliefs and assumptions of the data. During the research there will be assumptions and the philosophy will define how these will be interpreted in relation to the research question (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 124). In other words, it is about how you see the world around you. According to Saunders et al. (2015, p. 125), there is no perfectly matching philosophy for business or management topics. The right philosophy depends on each researcher and how the research topic which will be examined.

3.3.2. Research strategy

The research strategy examines how it is able to answer the research question (Creswell, 2014). It is the link between the philosophy and subsequent choice of methods to gather and interpret the data (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 177). There are two different research strategies: qualitative and quantitative. According to Saunders et al. (2015, p. 165), the classic way to distinguish these two strategies is that one is numeric (quantitative) and the other one non-numeric (qualitative).

Creswell (2014) describes quantitative research as the analysis of relationships between different variables. Creswell (2014) states that in recent quantitative studies the number of variables has increased. Data is usually measured numerically and analysed by statistical tools. The information gathering process is standardised, therefore, it is important that all questions are clear so that no misunderstandings may occur (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 166). The whole research process is very structured and conclusions are generalizable (Bell and Waters, 2018, p. 39). Bell and Waters (2018, p. 40) criticise that this approach does not take any human thoughts or emotions into account. The standardized questionnaire cannot gather information about what the respondents actually think about the research topic.

Saunders et al. (2015 p. 165) indicates that qualitative research is “...non-standardised so that questions and procedures may alter and emerge during the research process...”. This helps the researcher to delve into the topic in detail and to gather more
relevant information. Qualitative research is suitable for the analysis of impacts or influences on certain topics (Pansare and Mohammadi, 2014). The qualitative approach analyses social phenomena and the gathered knowledge is often based on experiences (Tucker et al., 1995). According to Bell and Waters (2018, p. 39), qualitative research is more focused on individual feelings and experiences and on trying to understand them instead of collecting any scientific theories.

However, Tucker et al. (1995) states that it can be hard sometimes for the researcher to evaluate answers and whether they are true in certain contexts or not. It is important that answers should not be generic. To avoid these circumstances, a variety of data must be collected which is aligned with a big effort.

Primary research for this study is dependent on managers who have been working in multicultural projects. There is not a huge number of people with the necessary experience and access to them is limited. Therefore, it does not make sense to use surveys as a research strategy where the research population must be bigger. The research needs to focus on the available managers and must gather as much information from them as possible. Therefore, the number of participants will be smaller. According to Bell and Waters (2018, p. 40), one of the advantages of qualitative research is the appropriate study of cultural and interpersonal relationships. Further, data about emotions, beliefs and characteristics can be gathered. These two factors are very important since this research topic will examine effective leadership which is characterised by interpersonal relationships. Further, the topic is narrowed down to the multicultural project team environment where emotions and different beliefs are linked with humans and their experiences.

The best way to get information about personal experience is through interviews. The interviews will be non-standardised so that questions and procedures may alter and emerge during the research process. It will also help to gain a better understanding of experiences that they have been made in real life practice. Further, the interviews will allow the chance to analyse the personal opinions of the respondents about leadership styles and teamwork. Questions about the impact and influence on different criteria can be gathered well because interviews provide the flexibility to react when providing answers. Additional
questions can scrutinize different arguments of the respondents to gather more in-depth information.

The above-mentioned arguments described as to why qualitative research is the most appropriate research strategy for this study.

3.3.3. Research approach

The research approach defines how the collected data in the literature review and the data that was collected in the primary research will be treated and connected (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 144). The two different approaches are deductive and inductive.

The deductive approach is often in relation to scientific research. According to Creswell (2014, p. 93), the researcher usually develops or tests a certain theory rather than creating. This will be done by analysing hypotheses which are derived from the research question. Another characteristic of deductive approach is that there must be a relationship between the variables leadership and multicultural project teams. Further, in the analysis of the research data the variables have to be measurable (Saunders and Lewis, 2018, p. 112).

The inductive approach based on the research data creates a theory or framework. Saunders et al. (2015, p. 147) describes the strength of inductive approach in being able to examine influences on variables and to analyse the factor of humans. Further, it allows more than one explanation of theories and gives more flexibility in reasoning. Creswell (2014, p. 99) states that information will be transformed into categories or themes which will be analysed and can also be added to by personal experience or literature.

In this research topic the numeric hypothesis cannot really be tested, nor can the existing theories be examined. Therefore, this research study will use the inductive approach. According to Creswell (2014, p. 98), inductive approach is mostly used when the research strategy is qualitative. The managers who were interviewed have given different explanations for the same phenomena. The answers were categorised into themes and a framework has been derived. Inductive approach helps the researcher to manage the fact that every manager sees concepts about leadership and teamwork differently. Several
perspectives can be interpreted and the researcher is able to support the created framework with own experiences that he has made.

3.3.4. Time horizon

Another part in of the research design is the selection of the time horizon. The choice is between cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Cross-sectional studies take a snapshot of the phenomena at a certain time. Longitudinal studies are primary research gathered over a longer timeframe and are more suitable to examine change or development (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 200). For this research project cross-sectional studies will be used since there is a time-constraint and the data must be collected as a snapshot because there are only 12 weeks available for this research study.

3.3.5. Limitations

The participants for this research study are managers who have had personal experiences in multicultural project teams. It is not realistic to have access to everyone. The researcher of this study has created a global network where he was able to select appropriate managers to interview. However, all of the respondents are people that the researcher knows and there are no strangers included. Therefore, one of the limitations is the access to potential respondents. Even though the researcher knew the participants, answers were not predefined, and the respondents were absolutely free to respond in whatever way that they deemed reasonable.

This research study is constrained in time. Finding a representative number of respondents and interviewing them within a short period of time is challenging. This is another reason why the respondents are from the researcher’s network and all of the respondents are known to the researcher.

Depending on the respondent’s location, interviews were either held in person or via Skype video call. Bell and Waters (2018, p. 244) state that Skype and other providers are a good alternative to face-to-face interviews. Respondents have been picked from different countries to increase the level of diversity. This made it impossible in terms of conducting personal interviews. Doing interviews by Skype makes it more difficult for the researcher to analyse facial impressions, ambiguities or hesitant behaviour. As Wilson and Doz (2012)
demonstrate, critical communication is always best to do in person. This study also describes, that different geographic locations can be challenging for communication. Therefore, because some interviews have to be on the phone it can be considered as a limitation for this research project.

3.4. Materials

As material for this research study the interview questions can be considered (appendix 1). A semi-structured interview has been picked. Saunders et al. (2015, p. 158) defines semi-structured interviews as a set of predetermined questions that can be used in a randomly picked order. The interviewer has the option to add further questions during the interview to get more detailed information about various topics. This requires an in-depth knowledge of the topic. From different themes which are derived from the literature and personal experience the questions are designed (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 402). The interview questions will be different types. Open questions will be used to allow for open thoughts and to provide the respondent with the possibility to develop an answer with deep insights, where he or she can add as much information as they want. Probing questions will be used to assess the importance of various points related to the research topic. To confirm facts or get a specific information closed questions are used. (Saunders et al. 2015, p. 409). In no situation shall interviewee have the feeling that he is forced to give any specific answer. The goal was to gather honest information from the respondents. Therefore, when phrasing the questions the wording was very specific and intentional so as not to use leading questions which might impact the answers given by the respondents.

3.5. Procedure

As mentioned previously, the interviewees were selected from the network of the researcher of this study. All of the asked respondents directly replied and were happy to take part in this study. Only one respondent was not available in the planned time frame. The interviews were planned within a time frame of two weeks and a maximum of two interviews were held per day. The interview questions and the information and consent sheet (appendix 2) were sent in advance to the respondents. All of them prepared for the
interview in advance and thought about possible answers which made the interview process much more successful. Even though most of the respondents were quite busy due to their work, they invested the time to prepare beforehand and to provide a productive interview. Also, nobody stopped or interrupted the interview due to work reasons. Only two respondents postponed the scheduled interview appointments shortly.

Most of the interviews were held in the English language. However, there were 4 interviews which were held in the German language due to a lack of fluency in the English language. Their answers in German were more useful instead of giving them in English language where the lack of fluency could lead to a miscommunication or misunderstanding. The difficulty lies on the researcher’s side in translating the information into English for the data analysis. The first two interviews took approximately 20 minutes while the others were approximately 30 minutes. The time variance is related to the collected interview experience of the researcher who got used to asking more in-depth questions. Further, the respondents did vary in the degree of detailed answers.

Some of the respondents live in different time zones. This was considered when the interview appointments were scheduled but did not bring up any additional challenge.

3.6. Ethics

Research needs to align with ethical norms, which are standards of behaviour and social norms (Saunders, 2015, p. 240). It relates everyone who is part of the research or is affected by it and it is the researcher’s responsibility to protect his respondents (Creswell, 2014, p. 132).

It also includes a respectful and reliable treatment of all data and information gathered by the primary research (Greenfield and Greener, 2016, p. 46).

Bell and Waters (2018, p. 237) recommend to send information about the study before the interviews and additionally mention it verbally at the beginning of the interview. For this study every respondent received a consent sheet (appendix 2) beforehand via mail. Interviews that took place face-to-face allowed for the signed document to be handed back by the interviewee before the interview. Interviewees who participated in interviews which were held via Skype sent the document back by mail.
The interviews were all recorded and interviewees were all informed and asked for their consent. After completing this research study the audio data will be deleted.

Saunders (2015, p. 243) has created a list of several ethical issues that might occur in the research process and provides some principals to avoid them. The following points will describe issues which might occur in this research topic and how the researcher wants to handle them:

- During the interviews the researcher wants to hear about experiences that the project managers have made with multicultural team members. Since the interviewee is talking about other people’s behaviour, it could happen that those people do not like that. This means that the research needs to be fully anonymous and the privacy must be respected. The respondents will be fully informed about the anonymity of the research. The interviewee will only give answers which are needed for a fruitful study if there is an atmosphere of trust.

- As said before, the author of this research has a network of managers which will be his research population. The author still has a business relationship with some of them and several of these people are suppliers or service providers for the author. This means they might feel that they have to participate the research and have no right to withdraw as they could lose future orders in case they would decline the research request. For this reason, the researcher will communicate from the beginning very clearly that it is voluntarily to attend the research, and everyone has the right to withdraw. Also, it will be communicated that this research topic is independent from the business relationship. If someone does not want to attend to the research, it will have no impact on future businesses.
3.7. Data Analysis

"Thematic Analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes are representing a theory, framework or important response from the data in relation to the research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the significance of a theme most likely depends on the number it occurs in the research data. According to Saunders et al. (2015, p. 579), thematic analysis can be considered as a very flexible method as it is not aligned with any specific philosophy.

Braun and Clark (2006) highlight that there are some decisions which need to be considered before starting the analysis:

What counts as a theme?
It is not necessary that a theme is measurable. Also, a theme does not have to appear in every respondent's transcript. But a repetition between several respondents should appear. Interesting information in relation to the research question which is not representative because it is only mentioned by one or two people will not be considered as a theme. But their point can be mentioned in an additional sentence. Even though data appears in every respondent's answer does not mean that it is a theme. Themes must be value-adding in relation to the research question.

A rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect
It is necessary to decide whether a rich description of the entire data set is done which will bring a bit of loose in depth. Or to analyse a detailed account which focuses on one theme or a specific group of themes. This research study has the intention to get a good idea on the participants view. Therefore, the full data set will be reflected.

Inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis
Inductive thematic analysis can be considered as a bottom-up approach and the theoretical as a top-down approach. The inductive manner is strongly connected to the gathered data. The data for this research has been collected by interviews and the themes will be based on this information. Therefore, creating the themes is independent from any theories or frameworks and they do not have to align with each other.
Semantic or latent themes
The semantic approach only focuses on what the respondents have said is not looking beyond this. The latent approach builds on the semantic coding and adds underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations. For this study the latent approach seems to be more appropriate. The researcher has his own experience in this field which might support further assumptions. Also, existing leadership and teamwork theories can be used in supporting or evaluating respondents’ answers.

Epistemology: essentialist/realist versus constructionist thematic analysis
The epistemology guides what is possible to say about data and how the meanings can be developed. Essentialist/realist is a report on the respondent’s experiences, meanings and realities, whereas constructionist analyses how experiences and events are connected with society. Leadership and teamwork are the variables of this research study. These two topics are strongly connected with sociocultural behaviour. Therefore, the constructionist approach will be chosen to analyse the experiences the respondents in the sociocultural context.

The many questions of qualitative research
The research question defines the topic of this research question. But there are other narrower questions right up to the interview questions. Deriving themes according to interview questions is not appropriate as this does not include any kind of analysis.

Qualitative analysis is usually characterised by several steps throughout the process. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest to follow their model of the six phases through the thematic analysis. These six phases have been used for the analysis of the primary research data of this study. However, it is not a simple process to move from one phase to the other. A certain flexibility is necessary to go back and forth between the phases (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

1. Familiarising yourself with the data
All of the interviews were audio recorded. This offered the possibility of listening to the interviews repeatedly. As this research project was limited in time, the
recordings were not fully transcribed. However, important points and notes were written down and a note sheet for each interview was created. This helped with the analysis.

2. Generating initial codes

Based on the audio recordings and on the note sheet created for each interview, a list of ideas was created. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a code is a feature of the data which seems to be interesting for the research study. Basically, all the information have been organised into groups. Each code had an allocated colour and the related information from the note sheet has been marked in each colour. The coding was completed manually, and no software was used.

3. Searching for themes

In this step the relationship between different codes has been examined to form themes. First, a new list of codes was created to highlight potential relationships. Second, the information from the note sheets were analysed to underline the relationships of codes. As a result, the themes have been created and were written down in a new list. At this step all themes had working titles.

Figure 8 shows as an example as to how the relationships of codes were highlighted to frame a theme.

Figure 8: Example for Relationship of Codes
4. **Reviewing themes**
   
   The created list with the themes has been compared with the available data to evaluate if the theme can be supported enough with data. Themes which were too similar were merged together to create a stronger theme.

5. **Defining and naming themes**
   
   In this step the themes have been refined and reworded. By defining the theme, it is necessary to see what is interesting and relevant about the dataset, and to highlight that information. Paraphrasing the data is not enough.

6. **Producing the report**
   
   The report supports the theme by showing valid data and providing quotations from respondents. Evidence of the themes is shown and supported by certain examples. Also, the themes are linked to already existing research.
4. Results

4.1. Introduction

Analysing the research data is the process of turning the gathered data into valuable information. This process will help answer the research question and to achieve the objectives of this study (Saunders and Lewis, 2018, p. 179). The analysis of the primary research is the basis on which create a new model and to draw a conclusion.

For the analysis of the data the approach of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) has been used. The five decisions which have to be made in advance and the six steps which are guiding the analysis are both described and applied in the methodology section under point 3.7.

The primary research for this study was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The interview had seven different questions as guidance (appendix 1). For the interviews ten different participants were selected. All of them are managers who have experience in leading multicultural project teams. Further, they are from different business sectors, nationalities, ages and genders. The high diversity of the sample gives a broad insight into the different ideas of leading multicultural teams. It was expected to receive different answers based on the diversity. An overview of all different participants is shown in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plant Manager</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Head of PM &amp; Operational Excellence</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Head of BU Coordination Technology &amp; Plants</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>New Business Development Manager</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Managing Director / Project Lead</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Project Lead</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Head of Sales/PM</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Project Manager Business Development</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings that are demonstrated in the following paragraphs are supported by direct quotations from interview respondents. All of these extracts from interviews are verbatim and errors in speech are coming from the respondents and not from the author of this research. The sequence of the themes does not mean that one is more important than another one.

4.2. Managers Tend to Prefer Technical before Personal Skills in their Multicultural Project Team

Participants were asked about the selection of their project teams. It is apparent that top-level managers are able to select the team members they want, whereas lower managers get a selection that has been completed by the organisation. Respondent 3 criticises that team members are mostly selected depending on the available resources. To the question of if he is allowed to select his own project team he answered as follows:

**Respondent 3**: “Typically, we don’t have such a big pool of resources available, for major projects at least, so the majority of the resources is predefined”.

This also supports the research of Wilson and Doz (2012), which states that reality teams are selected too often due to their availability instead of their matching skills. However, the respondents who cannot select their own team members are at least able to express wishes about people who would fit well, as the following extracts show:

**Respondent 7**: “Looking at the abilities and capabilities that people have we can at least say that different characteristics work better together than others”.

**Respondent 8**: “Basically team members get selected for me, but I can express a wish or try to steer in one direction that suits me the best”.

Project managers have the responsibility for project success. One factor to achieve success are the team member. As the respondents are all moving in different areas, they define success differently. According to respondent 9, for him the only thing that really matters is to satisfy the customer at the end of the day. Whereas respondent 8 defines the cost factor within his projects as most important. The literature review has demonstrated,
that project success can be defined in various ways. It depends on the company and the project type.

Selecting the right individuals for a project team can be the first step to success. In this matter, managers are most likely considering technical skills as being more important than personal skills, as the following statement shows:

**Respondent 4:** “Priority for the projects that I am responsible for, such as investments into new machine equipment, the technical skills are most important”.

Respondent 8 mentions that he really needs technical experience in the field that the company is moving in. He states that it is easier for him to compensate for a lack of personal skills than technical skills.

Very interesting in this context is that the three female respondents evaluate personal skills as either more or equally important. Respondent 1 says if she has to work with someone for a longer amount of time she looks more to personal skills because the technical ones can be trained. Respondent 5 and 7 both highlighted the importance of communication skills and of being a team player:

**Respondent 5:** “If I could choose a person, I would of course choose someone with good communication skills ... and knowledge about the matter are for me the two most important skills”.

**Respondent 7:** “It always depends on the project of course. But to make projects themselves to deliver at least on time, I think it is always good to first look on the personal skills. To really have a look on how are people structured, how is the communication working, are the people team players. And then in the second step also have a look at the technical capabilities. … What makes projects really successful are personal skills.”

Even though females rate personal skills higher than the male respondents, technical skills have a high priority for everyone. The perfect composition is of good technical skills with a matching personality as respondent 2 states. This aligns with the research by Müller and Turner (2010) which states that people whose personal characteristics fit with the requirements usually perform better.
To have a successful project performance it is necessary to have a team with skilled people who bring the specific technical experience which is necessary for the project. Additionally, the personal skills of every team member should not be underestimated as this will have an impact on success as well. At the end it is the manager’s responsibility to select the right team or express wishes for a well-functioning and successful team composition. But the research shows that managers tend to prefer the technical before social skills in multicultural teams.

4.3. Leadership of Multicultural Teams is Characterised by Less Authority

The third question of the interview focused on whether managers are changing their leadership style when leading multicultural versus monocultural teams. All of the German/Austrian/Swiss respondents emphasized how drastically a change in leadership is necessary. They consistently said that it is impossible to lead a multicultural team in the same behaviour as they would do with people from their same culture. This supplemented with the GLOBE study (no date), which states that the Germanic (German, Austrian, Swiss) leadership is characterised by participative style. This means it is emphasized by delegation and equality.

When the German respondents were asked about the differences in leading multicultural teams to monocultural teams, they answered the following:

**Respondent 3:** “When I have a team with multiple different cultures at the same time, for example in a workshop where I have three or four different cultures, or conference calls or such, then I am in general a little bit more reserved, little bit more polite, not too direct as I would be in a pure German team.”

**Respondent 4:** “The German values are very different, does not matter if the other person is Russian, Polish or American, basically you have to realise it and you cannot be as dominate as you would be in your own cultural environment.”

Respondent 4 and 8 are highlighting that they cannot be too demanding of people who come from other cultures. If a manager needs information, he needs to prepare and
process things differently. The person from the other culture must be motivated that providing information has a benefit to himself as well.

When respondent 8 was asked about the differences in requesting information from team members of other cultures he gave the following answer:

**Respondent 8:** “For instance, a Bangladeshi is not as consequent as a German in his workmanship, opinion and sustainability and things like that. Then I have to be different. I have to be more focussed in such countries, same in Africa, and have to process things in such a way for the people ... that they are kind of forced to answer me. Not with a date but with the preparation of my question. ... Only setting deadlines will be ignored”.

The leadership with more authority seems to work in Germanic countries but will not work successfully in teams with other cultures. Respondent 9 highlights in this context, that in some cultures the personal relationship between people has a very high priority. Starting a project with a Germanic straight-forward authoritarian approach from the manager will not work out.

Respondents 1, 5 and 6, who are not from the Germanic area answered differently about authority in their leadership. They agree on not changing their leadership style depending on multicultural or monocultural teams and their general approach of leading is characterised by less authority.

Respondent 6 answered the question about authority as follows:

**Respondent 6:** *My leadership is far from authoritative. ... The project team member must be intrinsically motivated as to the success of the project on the same level that I am. This is the main objective and everyone needs to be aware of why he is doing it”.*

This answer strongly aligns with the answer of respondent 8, who says that he needs to bring multicultural people in the position where they realise their role and the importance of it within the project to perform properly.

Respondent 1 clearly stated that she is following a leadership style with less authority, regardless if the team is multicultural or monocultural. When she was asked if there are still slight leadership differences between mono- and multicultural she answered the following:
Respondent 1: “My behaviour is the same, but I have more energy to calm down some people with strong beliefs, strong behaviour, selfish behaviours to make them join the team”.

All respondents either adapt their behaviour and leadership by reducing their level of authority or already act with low authority in general. Summarizing, all agree that low authority will make a project successful in a multicultural team.

4.4. Manager’s Multicultural Knowledge comes from Professional Experience

Working in multicultural project teams requires a certain knowledge and awareness about the different cultures. In the interviews the participants have been asked where they got their knowledge about other cultures. This question tended to collect information about multicultural trainings provided by organisations. However, almost all of the participants answered that their multicultural knowledge comes from experiences that they have had. Asking the participants where they learned how to interact with other cultures they answered as followed:

Respondent 10: “It is just a matter of experience while you’re working through different projects, meeting new people, you get more open-minded with every project. So over the time you adapt to different structures and this is how you gather the experience.”

Respondent 9: “You have to listen, to get a feeling for the people and there is even a difference from America to the Caribbean and you have to ask about the country, how it is there and to show interest to make a good impression. This is what everyone needs to learn in our organisation.”

Multicultural trainings were stressed by half of the respondents. Only respondents 7, 8 and 9 have said that their organisation offers trainings to their employees. These three respondents are working for different multinational enterprises, which are by far the biggest in this sample. It seems that smaller companies are not offering this type of trainings to
their employees. Respondent 5 clearly claims that trainings are necessary to adjust to the multicultural teams and to learn about behaviours and beliefs of other cultures. Respondent 3 stated the need for multicultural training and said the following about the status in his organisation and how to close the multicultural gap of some managers:

**Respondent 3:** “*We have kind of a change management training and there is a little aspect of multicultural training, but it is minimum. One option would be a training, the company just does not do it. The other option is in general as a leader, when we start a project that we would address the different cultures in the kick-off meeting and say be tolerant, be open, etc. In the moment we do not do that, but it is definitely something we could do moving forward.*”

The idea of highlighting the cultural challenges at the beginning of new projects is already done in the organisation of respondent 4. She mentions that it helps that team members can always refer back to the discussions and decisions made in this meeting when any kind of obstacles occur. According to her experience, the collaboration within the team is a lot better between the people who attended this meeting than to those who were not. Also, respondent 5 sympathises with the approach of setting the multicultural challenge as a topic in kick-off meetings.

Whereas, respondent 8 and 9 are critical of this approach. Both state that they are working in a multinational company and multicultural teams are daily business. Therefore, it is not necessary to mention it prior to each project start.

In question 6 the participants were asked whether they see today’s college graduates as being better prepared to interact on multicultural teams. All participants agree that graduates have today more opportunities to interact with other cultures. This is simplified through semester and internships abroad or open borders which makes travelling a lot easier. Respondent 1 and 8 stress in this matter that the cultural awareness really depends on the education of young people.

The oldest participant in this sample, respondent 4, says that it must be a lot easier for the younger generation to deal with multicultural teams due to the above-mentioned reasons. In contrast, the youngest participant, respondent 2, mentions that multicultural awareness
has nothing to do with the age. It is of a greater importance for people to experience multicultural exposure as opposed to it being based on age.

Respondent 7 replied to the multicultural abilities of today’s graduates as follows:

**Respondent 7:** “**Their general awareness of different cultures and especially also the specifics of those cultures is much greater. However, I need to say that of course some of them lived abroad for a time, many, many, many travel a lot but that does not make you know what culture is and understand the matter of people there.**”

**Respondent 5:** “**...to spend some time somewhere, or to be on holiday somewhere and to be able to have success in a multicultural team, I think it is still two different things**”.

The opinion about today’s graduates are different throughout all of the participants. But they agree that the cultural awareness of most of the young people is much greater. They might have it easier in today’s multicultural world, but all of the participants agree as well, based on that they have to make their experiences first. The actual multicultural knowledge for project management cannot be learned in a semester abroad or by taking holidays in different countries. Respondent 8 summarized it very appropriate as followed:

**Respondent 8:** “**A young graduate has no experience yet and had nothing to do in this business context before when compared to an older employee. On the other hand, an older, experienced employee who has been doing this for 15 years is not that adaptable anymore. Therefore, it is good and bad for both sides**”.

### 4.5 Emotional Intelligence is a Key for Successful Leading of Multicultural Teams

Almost all of the interview participants knew the term emotional intelligence (EI) and were able to give a short definition in their own words. Also, they all agreed on the importance of EI as related to leadership.

The respondents were asked about the importance of EI in their daily routine:

**Respondent 2:** “**In hiring it is very important because some people want money, some people title, some people want an extra day off. So, it is really important to emotionally expect that from interviews.**”
Respondent 10: “I am responsible that my employees are performing as good as they can. Therefore, I need to know how I am able to motivate them to get maximum out of them.”

Respondent 3: “I need to understand or need to consider why a certain individual is behaving like it is behaving and how I can best address this person.”

As these three responses have shown, a manager needs to understand his employees to be able to manage them appropriately. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, working with multicultural team members requires an understanding of other cultures beliefs and behaviours. In global teams many different cultural backgrounds come together and need to be managed. Respondent 8 highlighted the importance of understanding how someone else thinks and to see things from different perspectives to be able to find solutions in conflicts. He further states that working with humans is always special and unique and particular sensitivity is required. Respondent 7 and 9 stressed the significance of personal relationships in multicultural teams. They said that EI helps them to create and maintain strong relationships.

EI is considered to be important in monocultural as well as multicultural teams. Respondent 5 said EI helps in everyday communication. Respondent 8 added that EI is important for leading every kind of teams and even for private life. However, most of the participants highlighted the significance of EI in multicultural teams is much greater. Following was replied when participants were asked about the importance of EI in multicultural compared to monocultural teams:

Respondent 4: “It is more important if you work in an international team because the emotional intelligence will help you manage the people.”

Respondent 7: “It is always an important skill, but I think it is more important for multicultural projects. Because often times those projects are also more virtual, it doesn’t need to be, but definitely when it also comes to more dispersed locations where the people are and where the project leader needs to manage them, then it is for sure the case. If the multicultural team is in one place all the time, I would still
say it is more important because the project leader needs to get the different interests and there is way more potential conflicts I would say in multicultural teams ...

Respondent 4 characterised EI as a key qualification for today’s managers. He justified it that technical skills can be learned, but EI cannot be learned, and he sees this as a critical skill in hiring someone or not. The literature review has shown that before that there are different opinions as to whether EI can be learned or not. As Chamorro-Premuzic (2013) stated, EI can be improved through coaching and reflecting experiences. Also, EI tends to increase with age because people get more mature and confident. Therefore, the statement of respondent 4 contradicts the existing research that EI cannot be learned.

However, EI is an ability that every manager should bring today. The primary research has shown that in multicultural teams it is even more important. It can be considered as the key to reach the people of different cultures and to lead them to project success.

4.6. Cross-cultural Transformational Leadership is most Appropriate for Multicultural Project Teams

Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018) highlighted in their research transformational and cross-cultural leadership as being the most appropriate for multicultural teams. Both terms are described more in depth in the literature review. The participants of the primary research in this study were asked whether they know one of these approaches. If not, they were asked about their understanding just from the term. Through all of the participants there was no clear understanding of these two leadership approaches. Some had a rough idea what it could mean, others had no inclination. Therefore, the interviewer explained the two approaches and asked if the sampled managers could identify with it. Most of respondents agreed that these two approaches might be effective in leading multicultural team. As previously highlighted, managers appreciate the approach with less authority which is characterised by transformational leadership. Respondent 7, 8 and 10 stressed that they can highly identify themselves with the approach to inspire people, give them responsibility and leading them with less
authority. However, respondent 8 points out that his leadership style always depends a bit on how the people are taking over the allocated responsibilities since this varies a lot. Respondent 6 added that leadership also depends on how much supervision team members need from him. Respondent 9 answered about the right leadership style even more controversially:

**Respondent 9:** “It is difficult to answer, because it mostly depends on the technical knowledge that each employee has. Also, on the age, the appearance, the characteristics and what kind of person the employee is. It is hard to answer in general.”

This statement by respondent 9 aligns very well with the research of Kuesten (2013) which says that a multicultural leader needs to be very adaptable.

Some of the respondents pointed out that a combination of transformational and cross-cultural leadership might be the most appropriate leadership style for multicultural teams.

**Respondent 3:** “For me actually it sounds like a mix of the two would be ideal. Obviously, it is good if you have a deep knowledge of different cultures and you can apply that, I think that is very beneficial. But also, from a transformational aspect, if you could apply that it would also be very beneficial. So, they do not necessarily contradict each other.”

**Respondent 10:** “I think there is a good possibility to combine them both, because they both have their advantages, that would just be in favour for themselves if you would combine them. If you have the skill to fuse them, it is good.”

Respondents who did not point out the combination of the two leadership styles by themselves were confronted with it by the interviewer. The response was throughout positive overall. This approach helps managers inspire and motivate their team members who are from different cultures and backgrounds to let them perform at their best. Respondents 5 and 7 agreed on the importance of cultural knowledge by the managers. But they also claimed that every team member needs to bring a certain degree of cultural knowledge and it not only relies on the managers.
Respondents 3, 4 and 10 are seeing a change of the manager’s role when they use transformational leadership. When the leader has less authority and the team members have a lot of influence, the project manager tends to take over the role as a moderator. It depends on the project type, but moderating might be very challenging.

Based on the findings in the primary research as well as the literature, the cross-cultural transformation leadership style is most effective when a manager needs to lead a multicultural project team. This approach offers enough flexibility to slightly adapt the leadership to different cultures. This was requested by several interview respondents, since it is hard to find only one approach for all cultures. Cross-cultural transformational leadership provides the framework where managers have the knowledge about different cultures to be able to adjust their inspiring and guiding leadership to let employees perform at their best. The flexibility of this leadership style fits to the statement of Prabhakar (2005), that there is not only one leadership style for a project manager. He needs to be flexible in adapting the leadership style to the project and current situations.

When talking in the interviews about leadership, respondents 8 and 9 added a very interesting side fact which influences their leadership style.

Respondent 8: “I have to impart certain company values to my team, and therefore I need to guide in a specific direction”.

Respondent 9: “I have to lead in the name of the company, and I have to represent its values”.

Respondents 8 and 9 are both working for global corporations and obviously there are some guidelines given to them which have an impact on their leadership. Nothing similar to this was mentioned by any of the other respondents who work in smaller companies.

4.7. Organisational Flexibility and Top-Management Awareness is Critical to Execute Multicultural Projects Successfully

The interview participants were asked whether or not, and when they have perceived a change towards project teams becoming more multicultural. The answers varied a lot. Even participants from the same company gave different answers. Respondents
1, 4, 5, and 6 gave different indications that they perceived a change in the last 5 to 15 years. However, respondents 3, 8, and 9 said that their company has always been moving in global markets. Respondent 2, 7 and 10, who are the youngest participants, responded that the teams in which they have been working have always been composed of multicultural members since they began working.

As the literature has demonstrated, the change to more multicultural teams has occurred due to globalisation and a rising number of expats. The reasons for this change have been confirmed by the interviewed respondents, as the following extracts show:

**Respondent 1:** “*The company built some factories abroad. In France, Poland, they also built new ones in Russia, in the US. We changed from a company which owned only subsidiaries in German speaking countries, to a company which owns factories in several countries, so they needed to change the work.*”

**Respondent 6:** “*The last five years I have realised a massive change, because the company changed from a small and medium-sized enterprise to an international group.*”

Through this rise in multicultural teams, organisations have to adjust to be able to deal with challenges that occur. In evaluating the results from the interviews, it appears that necessary adjustments really depend on the company because most answers varied. Nevertheless, there are some similarities. Respondents 2, 3, 4, 7, and 10 pointed out the importance of a company language. Even though English is mostly spoken, English in the business context is more challenging than the English that non-native speakers learned in school. According to the mentioned respondents, this can lead to major misunderstandings. Specific terms are needed for efficient communication. As Gehrke and Claes (2014, p. 51) confirm, a company language in today’s business is inevitable. And as respondent 3 clearly states, companies which do not have a company language will struggle in their projects. It is the organisation’s responsibility to be aware of this challenge and to start with tools such as a company language to facilitate the collaboration.

Respondents 1 and 5 pointed out that a company does not need to change its general structure when they are active internationally. However, respondent 3 states that
predefined global project teams are a good thing. He adds that the available resources for this kind of teams will be a constraint though. Respondent 6 states that the organisation needs a well-functioning project management system so that managers can act proactively. The literature demonstrates that flexibility and adjustment in structure is necessary, especially when projects become multicultural. According to Miller et al. (2000), the role of the project management must be clear to everyone in the organisation and it might need to be adjusted when the project becomes multicultural. The varying arguments of the respondents prove that depending on each project or company the organisation has to adjust itself. The importance of flexibility was pointed out with examples by respondent 2 and 7:

**Respondent 2:** “Probably important is to have flexible work set-ups. We have an Orthodox Christian on the team and his Christmas is two weeks after our Christmas, so we do not need to adjust but adjust in the heads so that we know he might want to work in between the years and take off two weeks later. And we take that into account when planning new features or tasks.”

**Respondent 7:** “In a project we did not consider at all the Islamic religion days and stuff like that. So, we learnt very quickly there that it will not work what we planned. ... Keep that in mind that there are different important things coming up for different religions, for different people and that the project or also the overall organisations are able to adapt flexibility according to the needs of those.”

The literature as well as the results of the interviews have shown that cultural awareness is important for leading multicultural teams. Some respondents pointed out that this does not only concern the project managers. In an organisation the top management needs to be the example for leadership in combination with cultural awareness. Respondent 4 criticised in this context that the management level has bad personal skills and does not bring the necessary EI. He stated that it is in their hands to shape the company culture. Respondent 3 expressed his opinion as followed:

**Respondent 3:** “In an ideal world management considers all the cultural aspects. Also, understands in advance what is the project about, what do I need, what is a challenge of the project. Maybe also some projects are best addressed with a certain
culture. So, the issue here is in my experience in the real world it does not happen at all.”

Additionally, respondent 8 highlighted that management needs to understand that globalisation and different geographic locations bring cultural differences and challenges. This aligns with the research of Wilson and Doz (2012), which states that the management needs to be aware about the significance of the project and that multicultural projects might have higher impact on resources.

Lots of different internal and external factors can be challenging for organisations with multicultural projects. It has been identified that flexibility and the general awareness of the top-management can be considered as a basis for well-functioning environment for multicultural projects. Only if management is aware of the possible obstacles, can they give support by adding resources, for example. Also, the research has identified that project managers expect awareness about the multicultural challenges from the management level and they value the additional effort. Independently from multicultural projects, Serrador et al. (2018) identified that the top management support, sufficient resources and the organisational willingness to adapt will lead to project success.

4.8. Managers are not Aware how to Create and Maintain Teamwork Atmosphere

The interviews also thematised teamwork in multicultural projects. All participants responded that teamwork is the basis for good performance. It does not matter whether they are monocultural or multicultural projects, teamwork is always essential. By analysing the interviews, it appears that managers see teamwork as an important principle in teams and not something that has to be created. As the literature has demonstrated, a well-functioning teamwork atmosphere can be a critical success factor and the responsibility for creation is in the hands of the manager. The significance is even higher when it comes to the complexity of multicultural projects. Therefore, it seems that managers might not be fully aware of their responsibility in establishing such an atmosphere. Only respondents 3, 4, and 7 mentioned methods for creating an atmosphere of teamwork. The following extracts
show how respondents establish teamwork and if they personally see a difference between mono- and multicultural teams:

**Respondent 3:** “I mean in general I try to provide clear targets to the team members, and I try to compliment when milestones have been achieved within the team. I communicate that with the team to keep the motivation high. I express also the importance of the project.

In general, it is a little bit more difficult with multicultural teams. Because you sometimes need to address certain characters and certain cultural characters I would say, to bring up the spirit. There might be certain cultures in general which are reserved and very distant and to bring them alive within a team can be a challenge.”

**Respondent 7:** “In the monocultural environment there were those personal meetings, so I was able to really get the people together. ... With the global team of course this was not possible so I was more trying to establish first really good individual relationships with each and every global lead and as not everybody could participate in person from the global teams I started to do more of a teambuilding by daily stand-ups that were online ... To summarize, it was more virtual, but more often also.”

Otherwise respondent 4 sees no difference between mono- and multicultural teams and his approach is as follows:

**Respondent 4:** “Humanity is the key, to accept people how they are, to treat them upfront are the topics. Let them do and also let them make mistakes. If you can establish this, you create a good atmosphere. If you come in the room and act like a high flyer you have already lost the team.”

Respondent 9 said for him the key for successful teamwork is communication. He states that the way you communicate and the voice that you use is deciding about the relationship to team members. Respondent 10 tries to create teamwork by selecting appropriate team members before the project starts. He also realised a difference in team atmospheres depending on the customers company structure whether it is owner-based or a big corporation.
As shown before in this research, there are strong alignments when it comes to leadership in general and in multicultural teams. Managers have similar approaches how to lead their teams. However, in teamwork it is the opposite. There are different approaches on how to establish an atmosphere of teamwork. The literature review shows that there are three factors for successful teamwork. The interview participants either did not mention any of the factors at all or only a few of them. This leads to two different assumptions.

1. Managers have a different understanding of what teamwork actually is.
2. Managers are not fully aware about the factors that lead to a good teamwork atmosphere.

Every participating manager knew the importance of teamwork to achieve project success. But they need to learn how to create and maintain the atmosphere.

4.9. Conclusion

The result part has analysed the findings of the primary research for this study. It shows that leading multicultural teams is a challenge. There are many obstacles of which managers must be aware to effectively handle. However, this research identified several principles which help managers to lead their multicultural team effectively. Besides the necessary adaptation of managers, also the team selection and organisational standards are components for success. Figure 9 illustrates the most important findings to achieve effective leadership of multicultural teams as a summary.

![Figure 9: Principles for Effective Leading of Multicultural Teams](image)
5. Discussion

The aim of this research project was to examine the impact of leadership on multicultural project teams. Leadership is a broad topic which includes a lot of different aspects. The study was based on the hypothesis that effective leadership has a direct impact on multicultural project teams. By connecting literature and primary research data, this study aimed to provide approaches that will help managers in leading their multicultural teams.

From the findings of the primary research, seven major themes were created. These themes are called the principles for effective leading of multicultural teams. The findings show how broad the topic of leadership can be considered. The responsibility of managers consists of the selection of the team members, how to manage, lead and interact with people, the awareness of other people’s cultures, the creation of teamwork and the establishment of a flexible organisation. Following these principles will help to execute multicultural projects successfully. Leadership is taking over a strong role in any kind of project. But this research study has shown that is has an even more important role in multicultural teams. Furthermore, leadership is very complex and there are many different aspects that need to be considered. The hypotheses that effective leadership has an impact on multicultural teams can therefore be considered as confirmed.

Beeth (1997) stated in his research, that there is a huge difference between leading monocultural and multicultural teams. The composition of each team leads to different challenges during the project and a manager must be even more adaptable. One of the main findings of this research project is that managers must be aware of the cultures that they are dealing with. They need to adapt the leadership style to the cultural needs and beliefs. According to Beeth (1997) a manager needs to commit to the culture, even on an emotional level. Selecting an appropriate leadership style which fits to the obstacles of multicultural teams is essential (Nagendra and Farooqui, 2016). Based on the findings a leadership style which is characterised by less authority appears or seems to be the best. The research conducted by Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018), a mixture of transformational leadership with an awareness and knowledge of cultures is the best approach to lead
multicultural teams. The interview respondents completely agreed with this leadership style. According to the respondents, it includes the characteristics which are needed for multicultural teams. Inspiring other people, leading with less authority and being aware of other people’s cultures will help managers to lead their team successfully. Also, this type of leadership allows for flexibility in adapting to a certain culture in order to fully meet someone’s individual needs.

The interviewed managers were all aware of the importance of EI and classified this ability as a key factor in interacting with multicultural teams. Baesu (2018) stated, that the best leaders are the ones who are able to empathise with their team members. The fact that EI is highly significant for transformational leadership, which is part of the most appropriate leadership style, underlines the importance of EI. According to the findings it is the key to understand and help manage other people’s emotions in order to bring them to their maximum performance. Also, the risk of conflicts within multicultural projects is higher than in monocultural projects (Marquart and Horvarth, cited in Fadhul, 2017). Being able to understand emotions helps to proactively avoid interpersonal conflicts. Additionally, the findings show that the ability of EI helps in selecting a well-functioning team composition. Depending on the organisational structure or individual position, managers are able to select their own team or at least express their wishes. Even though managers prefer technical over personal skills, the personal side should not be underestimated in team compositions. Selecting the right personalities has a strong relationship to EI to identify who matches with who.

Another aspect of leadership is teamwork. According to Yang et. al. (2011), teamwork has a high impact on performance and success, especially in international projects. The interview respondents stated the relationship of teamwork and project performance throughout the study. However, no one was really aware what teamwork actually means. The literature describes teamwork as having three factors: communication, collaboration and cohesiveness (Yang et al., 2011). Not one of the interview participants mentioned these three factors in relation to team work. Therefore, a link between the already existing awareness of managers and the actual approaches of how to create teamwork must be established. This will help to make project teams more successful. As Gehrke and Claes (2014, p. 119) stated, well-functioning groups are the key for organisations to achieve their
objectives. The lack of managers’ theoretical knowledge will be described below in further research.

According to Syed Muhammad Javed Iqbal et al. (2017), organisations also need to realise the importance of teamwork in projects. In many aspects, it is essential that organisations and top-management are aware of the need to live certain standards top-down. One of the findings is, that the management needs to understand the challenges and obstacles in multicultural projects as well as be a good example for cultural awareness.

The organisational structure does not matter directly when it comes to multicultural projects. Mintzberg (2016) stated that there is no right or wrong structure, but that it must align with the features of the organisation. The interviews clearly show that nobody expressed the idea that there is one specific structure that fits the best for multicultural teams. Also, they agreed that organisations do not have to change the structure when they change from mono- to multicultural project teams. However, Miller et al. (2002) highlights that it is important to define and know the role of project management within the organisation. Wilson and Doz (2012) state that the project teams need to be settled reasonably, so that resources can be allocated accordingly. This is necessary because usually more resources are needed in global projects. Additionally, the interview respondents demonstrated additionally that flexibility in organisational structure is necessary. The structure must be adjustable to one extent to be able to compensate for cultural differences.

The findings and the literature review of this research project are match the hypothesis. However, there are some limitations of this study which need to be considered. The sample for the interview was selected from a pool of people who were available and known by the researcher. Due to the lack of time it was not possible to select other people. The sample was very diverse in gender, age and nationality. However, the mix has made it a bit more complicated to analyse and identify meaningful data. Having this diversity, a bigger sample size would be good to have more representative data. For instance, the three youngest in the sample sometimes had a different perspective than the older ones. However, to frame a representative theme, the data was not insufficient. Also, there were only two respondents from a global corporate, who a few times, had similar opinions that
were completely different than the others. Therefore, the sample size must be seen as a weakness and should have been bigger. However, the diversity in the sample can be considered as a strength, as it gives a very broad idea of differing cultural opinions. This study did not just focus on one specific culture, therefore, it was important to cover different nationalities. Further, the study did not focus on a specific business field, therefore, the different positions and companies gave interesting insights. The respondents were of high quality as well. All respondents are currently managers themselves who have work experience in the multicultural team environment. The statements shared in the interviews are all based on real experiences. Nobody was required to answer anything that they have never experienced before themselves. Therefore, there is no risk in this research that any answers given are speculative or fictional.

Future research on this topic can be slightly modified. As previously stated, the sample size was a weakness and should therefore be bigger next time. Additionally, a survey could be added to the research design. A survey would provide the chance to gather some statistical data to describe trends, opinions or attitudes (Creswell 2014). Leadership differences in age and gender could be collected in a more effective way and would be more representative. It could be very valuable to have primary data from interviews with experts on one hand and numeric survey data on the other. Furthermore, the researcher realised that there is a lack of theoretical knowledge of teamwork during the interviews. As previously demonstrated, teamwork plays a part in leadership. The interviews did not dive deep enough into the topic of teamwork. Therefore, it would make sense to conduct a more in-depth analysis of this topic. There is a general awareness of teamwork, but it seems that managers have individual approaches to create it and do not know how to measure it. There is theoretic research about teamwork and factors to measure it, but it would be interesting to see how this relates to experiences in real life. Especially with the focus on multicultural teams, future research might generate new material. This new knowledge could be applied by managers to improve their teamwork atmosphere. Approaches of how to establish teamwork in multicultural teams will help them to improve their project performance. Also, it might be the responsibility of
companies to enhance their managers knowledge and understanding of this fundamental topic, either through interactive workshops or courses.

Another finding of the research was that managers gather their multicultural knowledge from personal experience. Some companies are offering trainings or workshops on working with different cultures. However, the result was that experience is the best way to learn about cultures. It would be interesting to analyse why more companies are not offering multicultural trainings to their employees. Future research could examine what the best methods for companies are to prepare their employees for multicultural projects. Even if personal experiences are the best way to learn, maybe there are approaches that allow companies to be supportive as well. Companies are interested in well-performing multicultural managers and need to know effective methods to support them. Therefore, it is suggested to further analyse possibilities on how multicultural awareness of managers can be improved and which role companies should take over.

Managers are taking over the main responsibility for success of multicultural projects. This study aimed to identify the impact of effective leadership on multicultural project teams. The main findings of this study are that there are seven principles for effective leadership of multicultural teams. These principles are from a broad spectrum, but are all part of leadership. If managers are able to follow and apply them, there will be a higher chance to improve the project performance of multicultural teams. The study has shown that there is strong relationship between effective leadership and the performance of multicultural project teams.
References


Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1. Are you able to select your own project team or is this done by the organisation? If you can pick the team, what are the skills that you are looking for?

2. Did you personally perceive during your career a change from monocultural to multicultural project teams?
   Sub-question depending on the answer before:
   Can you say when it happened and what the drivers for this change were?

3. Do you change (or Did you change) your leadership and teamwork style depending on working with monocultural or multicultural teams and where are the differences?

4. How do/does...
   a. you adjust yourself to multicultural teams?
   b. your colleagues/project team member have to adjust to multicultural teams?
   c. an organisation/management level have to adjust to deal with this change in team composition?

5. Research mentions two leadership models which fit the best to handle multicultural challenges: Transformational and Cross-cultural Leadership. How do you understand and interpret these two models?

6. Do you think todays graduates are prepared enough to work in multicultural teams or is it necessary to train them first?

7. To come to a conclusion, do you see working in a multicultural team as a bigger challenge than a monocultural team?
Appendix 2: Information Form and Consent Sheet

Information Form and Consent Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE
The Impact of Effective Leadership on Multicultural Project Teams

You are being asked to take part in a research study about the change of team compositions from monocultural to multicultural and how it influenced project managers in their leadership and teamwork.

This research study is executed by Markus Stolzenberger, MBA student at Dublin Business School. Supervisor for this study is John Lamont. This research study is part of the MBA program at Dublin Business School and it has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
In this study, you will be asked to share your personal experiences about multicultural projects. The questions will focus on your leadership and teamwork style and will ask you about success factors for multicultural teams. All questions will refer to your personal opinion and experience.

TIME COMMITMENT
The study typically takes around 30 minutes and will be one time only. It might happen that I have to get back to you to clarify certain points which are not clear in the analysis of the interview.

PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS
You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you. You have the right to have your questions about the
procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study’s outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY
The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you except your gender, nationality and age. This will help me to differentiate the answers for a better and detailed analysis. Your name will be anonymised.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
I or / and John Lamont will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at John.Lamont@dbs.ie or +353 1 417 7500

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

Participant’s Name (Printed)  
Markus Stolzenberger

Participant’s signature

Student Name (Printed)  

Student Name signature

Date