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# COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES BETWEEN THE PROCUREMENT & LOGISTICS TEAM AND THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM OF FINLAND & INDIA

Company X

Business Economics
2024

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Liiketalouden koulutusohjelma

# TIIVISTELMÄ

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| Tekijä | Katja Laakso |
| Opinnäytetyön nimi | Viestintähaasteet hankinta- ja logistiikkatiimin ja projektijohdon Suomen & Intian välillä |
| Vuosi | 2024 |
| Kieli | englanti |
| Sivumäärä | 63 + 2 liitettä |
| Ohjaaja | Teemu Myllylä |

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tunnistaa toimeksiantajan hankinta- ja logistiikkatiimin ja projektijohdon välisiä viestintähaasteita, ja tarjota käytännön keinoja vähentää niitä. Toimeksiantaja on teknologia-alan yritys, joka toimii globaalisti meri- ja energiamarkkinoilla.

Teoreettinen viitekehys on tukena tutkimukselle, sekä tutkimusten analysoinnille. Teoriaosassa ensimmäisenä käsitellään organisaation hallintaa, ja organisaatiorakenteen ja ryhmätyön merkitystä viestinnässä. Toisena käsitellään viestintää ja sen eri ulottuvuuksia, sekä lopuksi viestinnän haasteita. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin laadullista teemahaastattelua tiimien jäsenille.

Tutkimukseen haastateltiin yhteensä kahdeksan työntekijää kahdesta tiimistä. Työn päätteeksi yritys x sai käytännön keinoja viestinnän kehittämiseen. Tuloksista selviää eri näkökulmia tiimien viestintään liittyen ja kohderyhmän omia havaintoja mahdollisista haasteista. Esimerkiksi oletukset ja väärintulkinnat ovat yleisimmät syyt väärinymmärryksille. Kasvokkain tapahtuvat tapaamiset ovat keskeinen ratkaisu tulosten perusteella. Tutkimuksessa esiin nousseet näkökulmat ja havainnot tarjoavat arvokasta tietoa yritykselle, joka voi hyödyntää niitä strategisessa päätöksenteossa ja toiminnan kehittämisessä.

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| Avainsanat | organisaation hallinta, kulttuurienvälinen viestintä, tiimiviestintä, viestinnän haasteet |

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to identify communication challenges between the procurement and logistics team and project management of company X, and to offer practical ways to reduce them. Company x is a technology company operating globally in the marine and energy markets.

The theoretical framework aims to support the research, as well as the analysis of the studies. The theoretical section first discusses organizational management, and the role of organizational structure and teamwork in communication. Secondly, communication and its different dimensions, and finally, the challenges of communication. The study used qualitative semi-structured interviews with team members.

A total of eight employees from two teams were interviewed for the study. At the end of the study, company x was given practical tools to improve communication. The results show different perspectives on team communication and the target group's own perceptions of possible challenges. For example, assumptions and misinterpretations are the most common causes of misunderstandings. Face-to-face meetings are a key solution, according to the results. The insights and findings of the study provide valuable information for the company to use in strategic decision-making and operational development.

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# 1   INTRODUCTION

In numerous organizations, communication is viewed as a problem that adversely affects organizational performance (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 222). Disparate cultural customs, viewpoints, and communication preferences among organization members can substantially impair team functioning by fostering miscommunication, conflict, and exclusion. Accurate information conveyance, cooperation, creativity, and a positive workplace culture all depend on effective communication. Understanding and negotiating cultural differences in communication has become increasingly important for organizations seeking success in today's globalized and interconnected world. (Spencer-Oatey, Franklin & Lazidou 2022, 131-138.)

This thesis is developed as part of the curriculum for the Vaasa University of Applied Sciences Business Administration degree program. It aims to enhance student's knowledge, professional development, and practical life skills (Arene 2020). This thesis is made for technology company's organization to identify and provide practical means to decrease communication challenges. Since the members of the organization's project teams come from different countries, mainly Finland and India, communication needs to be even more concentrated.

## 1.1  Background and objectives

The topic for this thesis came from the organization of the company, and from my observations in the procurement and logistics team. Misunderstandings were noticed, and they may have caused changes, delays, and problems for different functions. The research problem is identifying and addressing the communication challenges between the procurement and logistics team, and the project management team, with the aim of enchasing collaboration and improving project outcomes. By researching the communication styles, the root cause can be found.

Based on the research problem, three research questions have emerged:

1. What are the key communication challenges between the procurement and logistics team and project management teams?
2. How priorities and objectives affect the effectiveness of communication between the teams?
3. What solutions are there to decrease communication challenges?

This thesis will focus on two teams: procurement and logistics team, and project management team.

## 1.2 Company x

Company x for this thesis is a global leader in lifecycle solutions and modern technology for the energy and marine sectors. Their focus centers on advancing sustainable technology and services innovation to assist their clients in consistently improving their economic and environmental outcomes. This case company has approximately 17 800 employees around the world, in 79 countries. Their net sales totaled EUR 6.0 billion.

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┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Project Management  │          │   Procurement &      │
│                      │          │     Logistics        │
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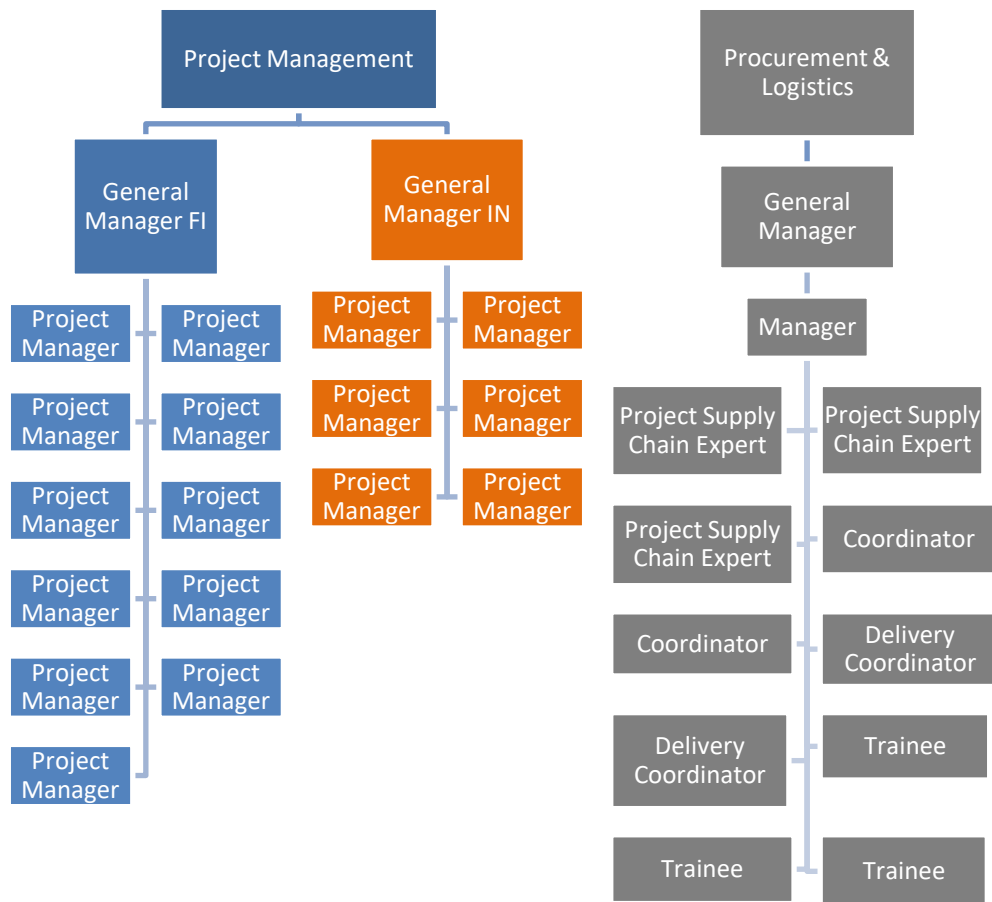
**Figure 1.** Organization chart.

Figure 1 shows the case company's organization chart, where orange color demonstrates the Indian project management team, and blue Finnish project management team. Grey color demonstrates the procurement and logistics team, which has 10 employees. The project management has 17 employees. Only project management team have employees from Finland and from India. These teams operate under projects, where the project management team takes care of the entire project planning process and the procurement, and logistics team manages the purchases from suppliers and deliveries to customers.

## 1.3  The structure of the thesis

The first chapter of this study is an introduction, which aim is to give lucid understanding of the paper to the reader. The three research questions are nominated,

and the objects of the paper are set. Also, the background of the study is presented. Company x is presented as well, and its operations and organization's teams.

The second chapter of this study is the theoretical framework, which includes the definitions of organizational management, communication theories and communication challenges. The aim of the definitions is to make foundation for the research. The organizational management chapter covers the organizational structure and teamwork, and how these approaches affect efficient outcomes. Organizational structure and teamwork, such as hierarchy, have a big influence on how teams communicate. The communication theory section covers the communication channels, which includes different ways of using internal channels to communicate with other team members. This section also covers intercultural communication, which deals with different characteristics of separate cultures and their impacts on organizations. The last area of the communication theory chapter is team communication, which aims to define proper ways to communicate as a team, and how a team is defined generally. The last section of the theoretical framework is communication challenges, where the most usual cases are defined, and what solutions there might be is discussed.

The third chapter of this paper is the empirical study. The empirical study presents the research methodology, research data collection method, and the research material analysis method of the thesis. In order to obtain more in-depth qualitative data, interviews with the project management team, and the procurement and logistics team are planned. A deeper comprehension of their opinion of communication challenges is thus attained.

The last chapter of the paper discusses the research result and conclusions. There is discussion of the research study validity and reliability. Proposals for the potential additional study, development, and the advantages the thesis offers to the case company are provided.

## 2    ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

In this chapter organizational structure and teamwork are defined. An organization is defined as an intentionally structured group of people formed with the specific intention of achieving specific goals or objectives. To begin with, organizations are identified by having a clear purpose or objective that directs their activities. This goal gives the organization's operations a clear direction and forms the basis upon which it is constructed. Second, organizations are made up of individuals who join forces to share their knowledge, abilities, and efforts in order to achieve common objectives. Third, organizations have a planned structure that defines the relationships, roles, and duties inside the organization. This structure is intended to improve communication, coordination, and decision-making processes, allowing the company to operate more effectively and efficiently. In essence, an organization is an intentional gathering of people organized to achieve specified goals, including fundamental characteristics such as a clear purpose, the presence of people, and an organized organization structure. (Gutterman 2023, 1; Hiriyappa 2008, 3-4.)

### 2.1  Organizational structure

An organizational structure is a system of rules, roles, relationships, and duties that define how a company's operations should be conducted to achieve its objectives. It also oversees the flow of information throughout the organization and defines the reporting connection between midlevel employees, senior management, executives, and owners. It functions as a company's hierarchy; however certain organizational structures emphasize a near-total lack of hierarchy. (Freedman, 2024.)

Since organizational structure is an abstract concept, it is essential to start by stating the seven aspects of structure that it is concerned with. The decisions made by senior management about each component will have a significant effect, either favorably or adversely, on the work happiness of the people and the success of the

firm. The first aspect of structure is work specialization, and how many tasks should be separated into distinct jobs inside an organization. It raises a question about whether employees should possess a high level of expertise in a narrow area or a lower level of specialization by performing various tasks. This decision impacts factors such as employee motivation, training costs, and time allocation. The second, what is hierarchy. Tall hierarchies have many layers or levels of management and flat hierarchies have few. What effects will this have on staff costs, employee motivation, and communication? (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 502-503.)

The third aspect of structure is span of control, which means that how many employees can a manager oversee, and should it be wide or narrow span of control? One aspect of structure is chain of command, which question, the person, or group to whom an individual should report regarding their task. The fifth aspect is departmentalization: should positions be arranged based on the kind of customer they serve, the product or service they provide, the region in which they operate, or some other factor? Alternatively, should they be organized inside departments whose personnel possess a common area of competence, also known as functional departmentalization. (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 503.)

The sixth aspect of structure is formalization, which means whether written guidelines, documentation, and protocols be utilized lightly or heavily to coordinate and manage the actions of people and groups. The final aspect is how centralized the decision-making process is. If the process is centralized, then the top of the corporation makes those decisions, and if it's decentralized, those decisions are delegated to employees lower in the organizational structure. (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 503.)

One common thread across these choices is delegation, which is the practice of managers giving employees the ability to make decisions (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 503). The quality and quantity of the output can be improved by delegating. By delegating, people can also help others beneath them become more capable and competent, which helps them to realize their full potential. (Tracy, 2013)
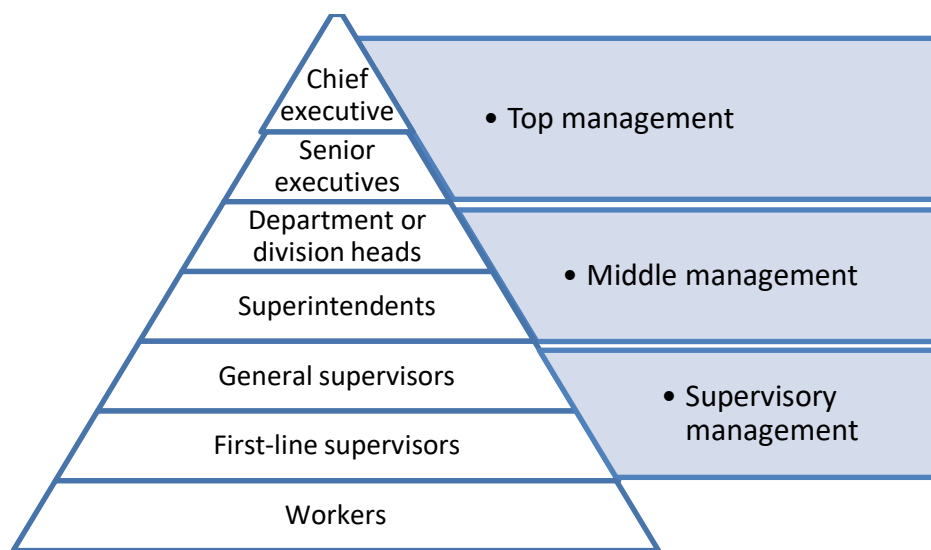
**Figure 2.** Organization structure (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013, 504).

Large organization structures are frequently represented as pyramids, as in Figure 2. The structure of an organization can takes many different forms; this is only one of them (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013). From the Figure can be seen that an organization's pyramid form indicates that it has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Its wide base suggests that most employees are positioned at the bottom and oversee producing the goods or providing the service. Reporting connections, according to proponents of the formal structure, govern, inspire, and coordinate workers, enabling them to collaborate more effectively toward organizational objectives (Huczynski & Buchanan 2013). Figure 1 shows six levels of management, each of which is positioned above the workers. The managerial ranks are shown in the diagram on the right as supervisory management, middle management, and top management. The job titles of managers who belong to each category are listed in the pyramid part of the diagram. The layers also show status disparities.

The aspects of organizational structure have an impact on employee attitudes and behaviors at work as well as the company's effectiveness and innovation. Together these aspects form both organic and mechanistic structures, depending on the scope of the aspects. Organic structures are decentralized, flexible, and enable

businesses to achieve innovation with low level of formalization. Whereas mechanistic structures are rigid and bureaucratic and help businesses achieve efficiency, and it is highly formalized and centralized. (University of Minnesota, 2015)

## 2.2 Teamwork

A team is typically described as "a small group of individuals with complementary skills and common purpose." Small, as it will become inefficient if there are too many individuals. A successful team is often thought to consist of five to twelve members. Nevertheless, the quantity of members is not as significant as the level of skill and competence of the members as well as the style of leadership exhibited by the group. Complementary abilities are necessary for teams because the greatest diversity and shared goal can only be achieved by assembling individuals with different strengths and preferences. The team must have talked and decided on its shared goal before it can accomplish anything. (Brent, Dent & Melville 2022.)

When presented with a challenge, people must collaborate as a team to take advantage of diversity, gather various viewpoints and perspectives, and choose how to best use the team's combined knowledge to end up with the best answer (Brent, Dent & Melville 2022). Members of diverse team come from a range of backgrounds, including gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and economic status. These elements provide team members with a unique perspective on the world, which inspires creative thinking. More diverse teams do better than more homogenous teams in terms of creativity and invention. (Cesare, 2023)

The fundamental requirements for productive teamwork are having a genuine team with defined members, being the appropriate size, having a stable membership, and working on a task that requires cooperation. The team is expected to have a valuable overall objective, which translates into difficult specific objectives for the team. Additionally, the team needs employees who fit the necessary responsibilities and possess the skills required. They must be team facilitators rather

than team derailers; by modeling positive behaviors, they should encourage productive teamwork rather than subvert, sabotage, or prevent it. (West, 2012)

Good team players are essential to effective teams. Not every member of the team works well with others. People with strong technical abilities who are disagreeable or emotionally unstable are one type of example we frequently encounter. Regardless of their technical skill, they consistently cause problems for the team, causing annoyance to others and overall making it difficult for them to get along with others. Another factor that affects a team's effectiveness is the concept of overdone strengths. When employed overly, a team member's primary strengths can quickly turn into disadvantages this occurs. Particularly when someone is under stress, this occurs. For instance, while confidence is a crucial quality for high-potential managers, it may also turn into arrogance and overconfidence. Extremely pleasant people might become overly pleasing. It is crucial that not only the qualities possessed by the team are acknowledged, but also the areas in which the team have room to grow. (Brent, Dent & Melville 2022.)

There are several reasons why teamwork is crucial in the workplace. Cooperation can increase production and efficiency, and teams can do more in less time and with fewer mistakes if challenging tasks are divided and responsibilities are shared. The second aspect is when multiple people work on challenging activities or projects, they will produce greater outcomes and come up with unique ideas than when they work alone. Teamwork also fosters progress on a personal and professional level, and it can foster new skill sets, lower stress levels, make employees happy, and foster a positive work atmosphere. Teams also innovate more quickly. Because a team approach brings the benefit of many viewpoints, skill sets, and experiences, it can result in faster and deeper reactive creativity when solving a task or problem. Healthy competition can be developed by teamwork. A healthy sense of competition among team members motivates workers to perform at their highest level. Team performance can continue to improve if the appropriate incentives are in place to encourage competitiveness. (BrightHR 2023.)

Within an organization, the teams are not separated. Their purpose comes from the objectives of the organizations they collaborate with, and ideally the teams fulfil that purpose by accomplishing their objectives and successfully collaborating with other teams within the organization. Careful development of systems and support structures that help teams succeed is necessary if teams are to realize their full potential. Teams' productivity, efficacy, and inventiveness will increase significantly if easy actions are taken to establish the proper culture within organizations and offer suitable support for team-based work. (West, 2012)

# 3   COMMUNICATION

Almost everything that matters to people, aside from a few basic needs for survival, comes from and is mediated by communication. The process of communication is how we acquire the laws and customs of our language and culture, form and maintain relationships, oversee production and markets, plan group governance and protection initiatives, and derive meaning from the things we do daily. (Hannawa & Spitzberg 2015, 3.)

In the following chapter are three aspects that affect communication competence in organizations defined. What are the communication channels, and how do they affect organizations? Intercultural communication is defined as well, and what that has to do with global organizations is then discussed. The last part of this chapter discusses team communication. How do teams communicate and what does it have to do with the competence of organizations?

## 3.1   Communication channels

A functional workplace community is dependent on having effective communication. On the other hand, a lot of workplace communities believe that information flow should be improved. The knowledge that is relevant to their job jobs should be something that employees can rely on. Supervisors should share their wealth of information with others. Since no one benefits from the flow of unneeded information, it is crucial to remove everything from that data that is not important to their work. The functioning of the work community and the efficient operation of the workplace suffer if employees believe they are not receiving information that affects them or their jobs. The worst-case scenario is when everyone is aware that something has happened, but no one is willing to share the details and provide an explanation. People lose faith in the information flow if circumstances often occur when it turns out that certain people knew something while others did not, or that nobody knew except the management. Workplaces must have effective channels for information as well as communication. (Joki 2018, 190.)

The different channels that members of an organization use for efficient communication are varied; the channels that an organization chooses to use depends on several factors, such as organization's size, profile, organizational culture, environmental culture, employee qualifications, and technical development level. Additionally, channel selection is influenced by the transactional character of the process and the ways in which individuals and groups create meaning inside an organization. Written and spoken communication channels are the two primary channels utilized in organizations. Written communication encompasses traditional channels like letters, reports, and manuals as well as computer-assisted electronic forms like e-mail, websites, instant messaging apps, and intranets that facilitate information sharing among staff members. On the other hand, oral communication channels comprise in-person interactions such as phone calls, social events, and team meetings. (Lee 2022.)

The information flow between teams must also be considered while developing communication channels. It is important to consider the necessity and utility of both giving and receiving knowledge, rather than feeling obligated to share everything with everyone. For instance, an organization using an intranet can organize all ongoing projects, including schedules, responsible parties, and project plans. Anyone with an interest in the project can request further details and utilize the project's outputs in this way. (Joki 2018, 193.)

Despite the abundance of internal communication channels, nothing can replace the conversation between managers and their staff members as well as the management's sight and presence (Joki 2018, 194). Face-to-face contact is thought to be beneficial for establishing relationships with bosses and informing coworkers about work-related matters. Additionally, it is stated that in-person meetings are preferred among all staff groups and have been proven to increase mutual understanding. Also, it is shown that workers thought in-person interactions were more productive than speaking on the phone or sending e-mails, and it improved their opinions of their supervisor and their profession. (Lee 2022.) Virtual meetings are

becoming more and more common in international corporate organizations since they reduce travel costs and time. However, in addition to the standard communication difficulties, global teams may comprise members who have never met in person, who live in different time zones, and for whom the technology may not be suitable. Meetings will probably not go as smoothly when using technical devices to carry out a meeting as they do in person when everyone is in the same room. This is because relationships are hard to build over the internet. (Bell & Martin 2014, 118.)

## 3.2  Intercultural communication

It is believed that the basic characteristic of culture is that all people learn it through various means. It is a set of attitudes, customs, and values that people acquire in their social surroundings rather than something they are born with. Family, the workplace, friends, school, and the social environment all contribute to the formation of this code and how individuals view the world and themselves. A person's cultural profile is also shaped by an individual's country of origin and the area in which they reside. Culture is a shared way of thinking among people in a particular civilization, even though individual conduct reflects culture. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 3.)

Cultural diversity in organizations brings benefits as well as difficulties in the organization. The entirety of what makes an individual or organization successful in a culturally diverse environment is defined in three aspects. The first is the abilities, traits, and values that individuals and small groups require to function globally, secondly the actions are the actions they take to foster these traits and advance as individuals and groups. The third aspect is the setting and circumstances that encourage and support these developments. When combined, these characteristics allow individuals and groups to deal with a variety of differences in an efficient and productive approach. (Spencer-Oatey & al. 2022, 10.)

Greet Hofstede's contribution to the field of culture and management is significant. His insights are widely used in prescriptive publications on dealing with different cultures, in addition to being often mentioned and applied in cross-cultural research. Despite its popularity – or maybe precisely because of it – his work has received harsh criticism from both practitioners and theorists. However, every study on culture and management must take Hofstede's work into consideration. Hofstede's groundbreaking research on the influence of cultural differences on management led to the development of a dimensional approach to cross-cultural comparisons. There are five dimensions included in dimensional approach, which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individual and collectivist orientation, masculine and feminine orientation, and short-term and long-term orientation. It is important to point out that these dimensions serve as a generic model and may not be appropriate in all situations. They present views embraced by most members of a cultural grouping in everyday context, and they characterize tendencies within a particular cultural grouping. Cultural differences are not considered in absolute terms, but rather in relative terms. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 32.)
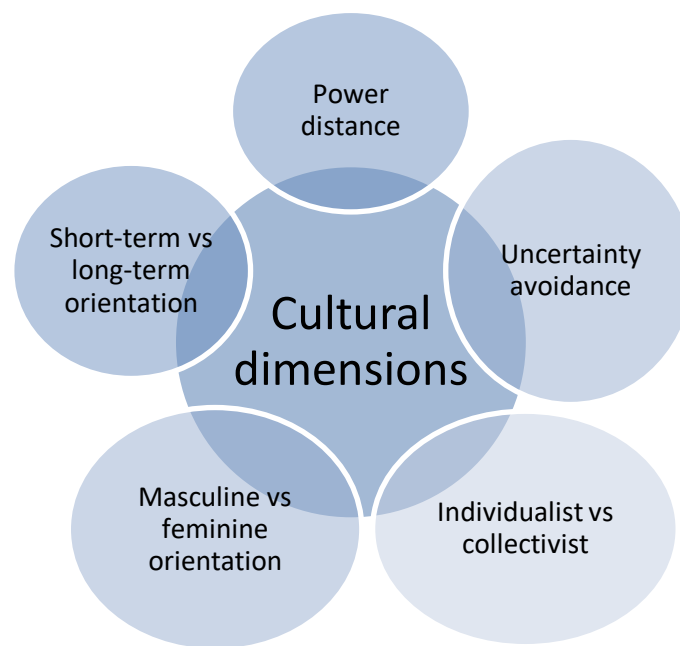
**Figure 3.** Hofstede's 5 cultural dimensions.

Figure 3 shows the five dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. The power distance, which is the first dimension, is meant to characterize the social hierarchy. It is approved by the group members and involves representatives of cultural organizations. Inequality depends on how much social contribution exists with this acceptance. Extensive research has demonstrated the legitimacy of cultures characterized by a high-power distance between the leader and subordinates. This dimension essentially captures a culture's attitude toward authority in general. In terms of relationships, the cross-cultural comparisons on this dimension illustrate how reliant subordinates are on their superiors. In high power distance cultures, effective managers are essentially task-focused, benevolent autocrats. In low power distance cultures, effective managers focus more on their team members and give them greater autonomy over decision making. (Escandon-Barbosa, Salas-Paramo, & Rialp-Criado 2021; Browaeys & Price 2015, 33.)

The second dimension, uncertainty avoidance, describes how cultures try to deal with uncomfortable ambiguity. High uncertainty avoidance societies establish and uphold rules, norms, and procedures to minimize difficult ambiguity. High uncertainty avoidance features include significant opposition to change, reliance on

written systems and procedures, maintaining thorough and tidy records, using formality in interactions with others, and preference for low and carefully considered risks. People who live in societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance are less receptive to "innovation champions" and "transformational leaders" and would rather have innovation promotion activities follow established organizational norms, formal channels, and rules. On the other hand, radical innovation is more accepted in societies with lower levels of uncertainty avoidance, even when it involves breaking established organizational rules and regulations. (Gutterman 2019, 92.)

The dimension of individualism and collectivism is concerned with the individual's relationship to the group. To what extent are people in society autonomous, and how much are they integrated in the group. Certain cultures prioritize interpersonal relationships over tasks or deals that need to be finished. In collectivism, achieving individual goals and professions is not as important as achieving collective achievement. In fact, for the benefit of society, some certain level of personal sacrifice may be required. Individual liberties and personal accomplishments are given greater importance in individualist societies. People are expected to fulfill their own goals. In this kind of setting, people are encouraged to compete with one another, which enables them to achieve their wants and goals – if they align with those of the organization they work for. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 34.)

The division of emotional responsibilities between genders is referred to as masculinity and femininity, which are also known as task oriented and person oriented. Masculine cultures place a high importance on power, ambition, material achievement, assertiveness, and competition. Relationships, a high quality of life, and a higher concern for marginalized groups – such as the homeless, the disabled, and refugees – are valued more in feminine cultures. The fifth dimension of Hofstede's dimensional approach is short-term and long-term orientation. Long-term oriented societies put more emphasis on the future and prioritize long-term success over immediate benefits. Characteristics like tenacity, endurance, thrift, long-

term growth, and adaptability are valued highly in these communities. In contrast, a culture that is short-term oriented emphasizes the now over the future, focuses on the immediate future, and aims to provide short-term satisfaction or success. (Worthy, Lavigne, & Romero 2020; Nickerson 2023.)

Hofstede clarified how, in an increasingly diverse world, cultural distinctions are important today. The cultural dimensions can be used to shed light on why particular behaviors are universal across cultural contexts. Cultural variables can also be utilized to forecast the interactions between individuals from various cultural backgrounds. When two individuals from cultures with significant power distance meet, for instance, they might find it difficult to communicate because of their different opinions on who should be in control. Hofstede's framework can assist managers in an organization in comprehending the reasons behind their employees' behavior. (Nickerson 2023.)

Conclusions can be drawn about the importance of the cultural context in addition to the interpretations people make when they communicate. Context is described as the environment in which the communication process occurs and serves to define the communication. Much of the communication may be predicted with a high degree of accuracy if one is aware of the physical background. The setting and surroundings that are chosen aid in giving the words that are spoken the intended meaning. Culture is context as well. Every culture has its own worldview, as well as unique ways of thinking and seeing the world. The context component aids in determining the degree to the source and recipient perceive the conveyed symbols similarly. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 339; Gordon 2024.)

One important aspect of intercultural communication is the knowledge of high and low context cultures. These indicate the degree of which cultural messages are expressed explicitly or implicitly as well as the significance of context in communication (Abiera 2021). When business associates from high-context and low-context cultures interact, their perceptions of what matters in communication may diverge significantly. For instance, the Swiss may like to get directly to the point

and conduct business when they meet the Japanese. Conversely, the Japanese would rather avoid discussing the current business in detail. They engage in this conversation to get to know each other and to discuss life in general. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 339.)

In global organizations it is not always possible to use person's native language. Nowadays, it is common to share a neutral foreign language, also known as 'international English'. This is mostly used, if speaker is from a nation where English is spoken as a second language in professional or educational settings. Since pronunciation is a natural part of how English is spoken in speaker's home country, the speaker might not be aware of how different his vocabulary is from that of his counterpart and might not be able to change it. According to some observes, international English is a step toward achieving cultural neutrality and removing the cultural associations with American and British English. Nevertheless, it has significant disadvantages as a kind of default language, such as the tendency to be superficial in conversation and difficulty of conveying ideas. There might be less opportunity to convey anything with depth and complexity or with words that do more than just describe what is being spoken. The true meaning of the expression can be lost. An admirable endeavor to make English simpler can end up creating more issues than it was intended to. It's possible for the connections between thoughts, ideas, and information to become less clear or nonexistent. The modified text might have lost a significant portion of the original's intended meaning if it had not been given adequate coherence, a clear context, or any verbal explanation. These issues commonly arise during email correspondence, as communications conveyed in telescopic form might lead to misunderstandings or a lack of comprehension. Beyond these issues, there is the matter of language serving as a powerful means of expressing cultural identity. The degree of motivation individuals must utilize a language not their own, which hinders their ability to assert their personal or cultural identity, varies. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 344-345.)

One important aspect of intercultural communication is Edward Hall's term "proxemics", which came when he studied the way that space is used in relation to human communication. "The interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture" is one definition of it. The basic idea is that different cultures have varied ideas about what "personal space" is and that the cultural experiences generally influence how we the space is used around. People in the Nordic region, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom generally have the highest demands for personal space. People in Asia, Europe, and South America have much lower expectations for their personal space. Attempting to read social signs is beneficial, especially in multicultural organizations. (Kington 2013.)

Body language, such as eye contact or facial expressions, may be sufficient to communicate specific information across cultures. However, nonverbal communication has varied meanings among cultures. For example, an innocuous hand gesture in one culture may be disrespectful in another. The variety with which different cultures convey their emotions through facial expressions has been one of the more unexpected discoveries. Despite this variation, certain facial expressions are universally understood while others are not. The degree of success that intercultural communication achieves varies greatly. A single or two differences in facial expressions can occasionally have a dramatic impact on communication. Therefore, the more nuanced meanings of the accents in facial signaling may be lost, even when the core meaning of the message is retained across cultural boundaries. It truly comes down to communication accuracy. (MasterClass 2022; Pogosyan 2021.)

Intercultural communication is heavily influenced by cultural factors. The primary cause of communication problems between people and groups who identify as belonging to different cultures is now thought to be the cultural element. Even in communication scenarios where language predominates, other factors such as context, proxemics, and facial expressions also play a role. Interlocutors may have

difficulties despite speaking the same language due to differences in their cultural backgrounds. (Browaeys & Price 2015, 329-350.)

## 3.3 Team communication

Communication within a team refers to the ways in which members engage with one another through written or spoken words as well as nonverbal signs. As an instance, team members frequently communicate via text or email as well as in person interactions, meetings, and while collaborating to finish tasks. Team leaders or managers can support their members in forming healthy communication habits, like speaking in an acceptable tone and actively listening. Effective communication increases the probability that team members will enjoy spending time together and work together to accomplish shared objectives. (Indeed 2022.)

Working in teams and groups has become a standard method of task organization and a technique to meet the high demands of a work environment that is always changing. The benefits and expectations of cooperation that are most frequently noted include increased organizational savings, more commitment to work, and enhanced job satisfaction. A reduction in the hierarchical structures at work, shared authority, improved quality of output, and productive work rates are further benefits. In addition, teams are frequently seen as a place where different types of expertise can be combined or developed. Together, they should provide more creative results and synergy than any one person could. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 29.)

In the modern workplace, technology facilitates communication to some extent, enabling teams to collaborate across organizational and geographic boundaries. In the workplace, using various tools for team communication has become regular, is not expected. Although it is expected that cooperation will meet the demands of today's dynamic, digitally enabled workplace, utilizing its benefits is neither straightforward nor well-understood. Organizations depend on effective teams, but not all teams function in the same manner. Teams depend on communication

to function, grow, and exist. To understand how to get the most out of teams, communication analysis is crucial. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 29; Raappana & Horila 2020.)

When teamwork is the foundation of collaboration, different aspects influence the communication processes and attributes. Because interpersonal communication is relational, dynamic, and contextual in nature, it is often complicated. The possibility of conflicting goals arising increases with the number of individuals participating in team interactions and the number of relationships involved. It will also take more coordination to have productive teamwork. To put it another way, when there are only two participants, it is usually easier to establish trust and make decisions than when there are five or more. The secret to comprehending team communication is to see teams as self-organizing social systems. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 29-30.)

Ground rules and norms have a significant effect on effective team communication. Norms hold more importance than communication skills, like providing feedback, actively listening, and asking open-ended questions. The guidelines that direct team members' behavior are called norms. Norms are expected behavior for team members when they engage with stakeholders, other team members, and each other. In general, teams function better when they intentionally discuss, assess, and ultimately accept a set of good norms. Members can learn the differences between appropriate and inappropriate communication practices from the norms. An example of communication norms is to present an opposing point of view or offer additional information to a disagreeing teammate, rather than knocking the teammate down directly. (Parker 2010.)

Although there are many kinds of teams, they all have the same primary purpose of achieving goals. A team's primary purpose is often determined by its goals, which might be long-term, broadly, or narrowly defined, or abstract. A production team's goal can be to create a model or product with precise specifications for a particular use, or it could be to create new items in general. It is also possible to

create goals specifically for a meeting, for example, the first meeting of a cooperative team could have as its goal getting to know one another. Goals are communicated and then carried out. Decision-making, problem-solving, planning, brainstorming, and social support are examples of interaction tasks that show how teams communicate to accomplish their goals. There are many emphases for tasks, some are more significant and endure longer than others, while others are less significant and only appear briefly. (Bonifacio 2024; Mikkola & Valo 2019, 33.)

Certain types of communication duties should be tailored to a certain team and goal. Furthermore, communication technology needs to be selected according to tasks. Communication technology provides as rich a form of communication as possible along with information processing tools necessary for complex and difficult tasks. If the completion of a task requires enhanced teamwork and trust, a communication device that permits seeing and hearing team members' faces would probably be appropriate. The tasks involving team interaction should be viewed considering various need levels. The group should understand the objectives set by the company, the organization, the team, and each member's responsibilities. (Bonifacio 2024; Mikkola & Valo 2019, 34-37.)

# 4 COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Everyone must value effective communication, from workers to leaders to organizational developers. Since everyone communicates, it is natural to assume that everyone must be at least somewhat competent. But it is frequently observed that the root of the issues at work is miscommunication or misunderstandings. Determining exactly what constitutes "good communication" and how it should or should not be improved can be challenging. It might be simpler to spot instances of inadequate or inefficient communication more often. People's expectations of effective communication can occasionally clash at work. The aim of this chapter is to identify different communication challenges and define the steps to better communication. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 165-166.)

## 4.1 Identifying communication challenges

The causes and solutions of communication problems might differ greatly. Diverse channels are used for communication, with multiple parties pursuing different goals. Given all the components, it should come as no surprise that businesses have a lot of communication difficulties. Understanding some of the most typical communication problems and how to resolve them can help create a group of self-assured, productive workers who are dedicated to assisting in the development of a profitable company. (Martinuzzi 2023.)

The most common communication challenges in the workplace result from multiplying and complex communication. For instance, heavy jargon usage such as terms that are too technical, unfamiliar, or difficult can cause challenges. Each department and company have its own jargon that is used on a regular basis to give the impression that everyone speaks the same "language".  Also, prejudices and expectations that may lead to stereotyping or incorrect assumptions. Individuals frequently hear what they expect to hear rather than what is really spoken, leading them to draw the wrong conclusions. Cultural norms also play a role in communication challenges. Many cultures have somewhat different social conventions, and

this is true of how people express their feelings. For instance, the idea of private space differs in many social contexts and cultural contexts. Overwhelming information may cause challenges, because an average person may receive up to 110 emails each day in addition to calls, video conferences, and internal meetings. Overuse of email hinders communication and often results in the loss, deletion, forgetting, or ignoring of crucial information. An excessive volume of data can quickly irritate employees. Since we desire useful process information, it is ineffective to push employees to the limit with continuous streaming. (Nowak 2021.)

Common problems in communication might be information silos as well. When individuals inside an organization only communicate with one another, it can lead to information silos. Due to its tendency to reduce openness, cooperation, teamwork, and productivity – all of which can drive up expenses and make corporate decisions more difficult – it may be a serious obstacle to professional communication. It can also create competitiveness and tension amongst departments. Effective business communication may be impeded by inconsistent communication delivery techniques. If workers are unaware of the routes of communication that are utilized to transmit types of information, they may get irritated. A lack of consistency increases the possibility of missing crucial information. (Nowak 2021.)

If a company has lack of standardized communication structure, it can lead to the dissemination of inaccurate information, provide room for misunderstandings to multiply, and generally undermine employees' capacity to support leaders in creating profitable company. Also, ineffective procedures of onboarding communication affect employees' certainty in communication. If there is no official communication training provided to new hires at the organization, they might not know where to look for the information they need to perform their tasks well or how to communicate. This may irritate them and hinder their advancement. (Nowak 2021.)

The difficulties of successful communication are more apparent than ever when discussing impediments to communication in the workplace. A few instances of

communication barriers that have surfaced in recent years are multigenerational workplaces, the increase in remote work, a scattered workforce, the introduction of new communication technology, and varying employee expectations. Recognizing communication challenges and implementing effective solutions allows one to avoid the negative effects of poor communication. This, in turn, fosters a cohesive team capable of productive collaboration, leading to providing excellent products and services. (Martinuzzi 2023; Martic 2023.)

## 4.2  Possible solutions

Interactions must be regularly evaluated in order to preserve effective workplace communication. To maintain positive working conditions and goal achievement, it is necessary to intentionally reflect on workplace communication even when things seem to be going well. Only when a planned change is reflected in conversations and activities at work does it happen. As such, it is critical that communication concerns are considered in all change processes. Ignoring communication, for example, might result in inappropriate communication habits that continue even when they are not appropriate for certain situations. This eventually leads to issues with work performance and workplace communication. Occasionally, the challenges are not very severe: frustration, annoyance, and overlapping tasks at work are a few examples of the symptoms, along with the results of ineffective work. Interpersonal tensions, disagreements, and confrontations, as well as decline in work process quality and stagnation, are additional occasions when the symptoms are more apparent. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 179-180.)

When establishing workplace communication, it is important to take the time and make thoughtful decisions. It is important to guarantee that the developing actions are planned centered around the causes of the problems that are seen. This calls for a methodical analysis of workplace discourse. Interpersonal communication problems frequently have their roots elsewhere. Going through the four stages of analysis is beneficial in these situations. The meanings attributed to the

work's mission, goals, and duties are the main emphasis of the first level of analysis. This level makes sure that everyone is on the same page regarding the duties at hand, the overall objectives of the workplace, and the equipment and supplies required for the job. At the second level, work processes are analyzed as information and acknowledge management processes. Relevant information is evaluated for timeliness and accessibility at this level. The third level involves an analysis of communication techniques to make sure they are current and operational. Interpersonal concerns including feedback, social support, and relational competency are the focus of the fourth level. By going through these stages of analysis, the data required for the development of communication is produced. (Mikkola & Valo 2019, 181.)

To avoid the impacts of communication challenges, it is important to know the steps to increase communication competence. Regarding the cultural diversity in the workplace, one solution would be to instruct the employees to deal with it through training and development initiatives. Intercultural training offers approaches to build more trust between employees. When they have established trusting relationships, they can be sure their jokes won't be taken offensively. It is also helpful to keep in mind that different cultures have different ideas about authority and hierarchy, which can easily result in heated situations. Educating them about the organization's authority and hierarchy specific to the region they serve and how to negotiate it to help them avoid cultural faux pas. (Martinuzzi 2023.)

Regarding the inconsistency and information silos, it would be good to make clear instructions and make it easily accessible for everyone. Whether using newsletters, email, chat platforms, or the intranet, making sure to have consistent approach and letting people know where to obtain information. A good workplace communication strategy is to send out firm information consistently using the same methods so that everyone receives it at the same time and is informed. As a leader it would be good to encourage team members to establish relationships

with all workers and prioritize transparency to foster effective workplace communication. Also, as soon as new employees join the company, it is important to let them know about communication policy and emphasize the importance of good communication. One way to guarantee that all employees follow the same rules is to make communications training mandatory. (Martinuzzi 2023.)

It has been demonstrated that regular and honest communication between leaders and employees improve engagement and employee morale. Consequently, there is an increase in job satisfaction and retention rates. The most crucial thing is to overcome these challenges and go above and beyond by utilizing the appropriate technology and communication tools. Additionally, the key to success is to maintain consistency in the communication efforts, agree on frequent meetings, ensure that communication is two-way, and make employees feel valued. These resources can quickly boost employee morale, engage more employees, improve communication within the organization, and increase productivity. (Jong-Fatal 2023.)

# 5 EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter of the thesis discloses the execution of the study. The study is an empirical study, and it focuses on challenges that teams face in their everyday tasks. This chapter selects and presents the research method and the target group and defines the theoretical framework.

## 5.1 Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework serves as the foundation for the research, demonstrates the place of the study in relation to previous studies, and directs the research. Theory aids in the researcher's organization, interpretation, and justification of the phenomenon being studied. Theory provides a conceptual framework within which the observations and outcomes are organized. Theoretical framework is a structuring and directing mechanism. There should be a logical consistency between theory and empiricism, meaning that theoretical framework should be connected to the research problem. (Günther & Hasanen 2021.)

The keywords and concepts of this thesis are organizational management, communication, and communication challenges. With these themes, the study about defining communication challenges for company x can be formed. With organizational management, the structure and effectiveness of teamwork can be viewed, and find out root causes for communication challenges. The chapter about communication shows how communication channels affect information flows, and how diverse teams operate with communication. With the communication chapter, the basic information of the communication in company x can be defined. The communication challenges chapter gives the explanation, how they arise, and how they can be fixed.

Theoretical framework provided the basis for the interviews. Organizational management was utilized to find out the teams' and organization's objectives and workload of the team members, and there is link to the organizational structure

and teamwork themes. Communication chapters were used to find out the communication channels used and their effectiveness. Also, intercultural communication and team communication were linked to the empirical study by searching for observations on cultural diversity in communication and general communication culture in the teams. Communication challenges were utilized to study what challenges are nominated and what improvements can be made.

## 5.2 Research methodology

In science, a method is a structured process used to seek knowledge or find solutions to real-world problems. The procedures and methods used to gather observations form the research methodology. It is the researcher's responsibility to observe, organize, and critically evaluate the clues provided by the observations. Methods are the foundation of the researcher's work in empirical research. Understanding and utilizing current techniques is crucial. The research problem and the methodology are closely related. The kind of information being sought, as well as where and from whom it is sought, typically influence the method selection. (Hirsjärvi, Remes, Sajavaara, & Sinivuori 2009, 183-184.)

Methods used in scientific research are often divided into two categories: qualitative and quantitative. The fact that qualitative and quantitative techniques are founded on different types of knowledge supports distinction. There is frequently a line of differentiation drawn between qualitative research, which addresses the "what" and "how" issues, and quantitative research, which mainly addresses the "why" questions. Although this contrast is oversimplified, it serves a purpose. Occasionally both can occur in one study. Instead of being an internally consistent research approach, qualitative research is constructed up of a wide range of research traditions and approaches, all of which have different assumptions about the nature of reality and how to analyze it. (Vuori 2021; Juhila 2021.)

Qualitative research is an extensive process of gaining knowledge, using data gathered from real, naturalistic circumstances. It favors the use of people as the primary means of data collection. Instead of using measurement devices, researchers rely more on their own observations and discussions with their subjects. Qualitative research also uses qualitative techniques to collect data: that is, it prioritizes techniques that give space to the human voice. Group interviews and semi-structured interviews are two examples. Qualitative research is also characterized by its adaptability to the situation and flexibility in the research. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2009, 164.)

In this study qualitative research method is used. The study aims to clarify and define connections of cause and effect related to communication challenges. It is important to make your own observations, for instance through interviews, so that responses are individualized. A comprehensive picture of a situation, which is likely to be complex, can be constructed through individual interviews.

## 5.3 Material collection method

In empirical research primary data or secondary can be used as a research material. Primary data is information gathered itself, and secondary data is already existing information gathered by others. It should be remembered that using secondary data may be more cost effective than gathering research data. Since the final data and the own data rarely link together exactly, it is crucial to be able to match the two. In order to choose a suitable target group for the study, this study uses primary data. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2009, 183-186.)

Basic data collection methods include questionnaires, interviews, observations, and the use of documents. Questionnaires provide a wide range of research data but can be too superficial when conducting qualitative research. Interviews are often the main method used in qualitative research. The interview can be adjusted and adapted to the situation and the interviewee, for example to clarify a particular answer or to find out the motivations behind the answers. On the other hand,

the interview is time-consuming and may be too stressful for the interviewee. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2009, 191-207.)

In this study, the semi-structured interview type is used as a data collection method. Open-ended, intermediate form interviews are called semi-structured interviews. All interviewees will be asked the same questions in this instance, but the interviewer has the freedom to change their order and the replies are not limited to the available alternatives. The subjects of a semi-structured interview are usually known, but the precise structure and order of the questions are usually not. What matters the most is that the interview goes forward based on specific themes, and meaning is revealed through interaction. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 47-48.)

## 5.4  Research plan

The form of the study will be individual interview. Although a group interview might save more time, it might not produce the greatest results given the topic under discussion. It may be too sensitive a topic for a group when it comes to communication difficulties. The ease with which an individual interview may be scheduled compared to a large group setting is another benefit of conducting one. The interview is structured around four different themes, basic information, organizational management, communication in general, and communication challenges. The aim is to get the conversation flowing according to the themes. Lastly, there will be given the opportunity to add any comments if the discussion raises them. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 61.)

Individuals are typically chosen for interviews based on their group representation (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 83). Eight individuals have been chosen for interviews, four from the project management, and four from the procurement and logistics team. Six of these individuals are Finnish, while two are Indian. The interviewees will be approached through internal channels and the time of the interviews will

be mutually agreed. The interviews are planned to last 30 minutes and will be conducted via video call. The interviews will be recorded.

The interviews followed the semi-structured interview body, which is formed by using theoretical framework. The planned time for interviews was optimal, and there was no hurry during the interview. The interviewees had a chance to add observations after the interviews if they had not thought about the themes enough beforehand. The records were transcribed after the interviews and analyzed several times.

Relevant information is gathered, and semi-structured interviews are examined in detail. The aim of data analysis is to describe and classify the data collected, trying to identify common features. This is followed by a phase of synthesis, in which all the data are re-examined in an attempt to understand the phenomenon under study from a theoretical point of view. The aim of the synthesis is to gain a thorough understanding of the subject after the theoretical study. The method of analysis used is discourse analysis, which seeks to find differences and similarities and pays attention to exceptional cases. The exceptional cases are crucial, when the scope of the interviewees is not wide, and under this topic, every observation contributes to the development of communication. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 144.)

# 6   RESULT ANALYSIS

In this chapter the study results are presented. The chapter is divided into addressing the target group and into three themes, which are based on theoretical framework. They are presented in the same order as in interview body (Appendix 1 & 2). All interviewees were interviewed with the same form. Due to flexibility of semi-structured interview, some additional questions could be asked to get broader answers.

## 6.1  Interviewees

The interviewees were from the teams in the target group, four members from procurement and logistics team, and four members from project management. They were chosen by their capacity to provide insightful responses based on the phenomenon, and by their ability to take part in the interview process. The interviewees from project management team are all in same position, but the positions in procurement and logistics team differ. Some positions have more responsibilities than others. Despite their positions they all work under the same projects and communicate with each other in their everyday tasks.

**Procurement & logistics**

- Purchase orders, order confirmations, other orders, intrastat reports, invoice revises, packing
- Assisting in logistics operations, purchase orders, packing lists
- Purchase orders, order confirmations, transportation of goods, invoice tracking, inquiries to freight forwarders, arranging transports, organizing and consolidating
- Purchase orders, material controlling, organizing finished and delayed goods, arranging collections, export reports, offers from freight forwarders, tracking of goods, packing, labelling

**Project management**

- Implementing projects, and their quality, timing, and budget; supporting sales
- Providing services to the customer in accordance with contract, responsibility for budget, customer satisfaction, and schedule; overall responsibility for the project
- Handling project as part of the lifecycle, tasks are everything that is related to project management: supporting sales, handling the entire contract from initiation to execution and closing and procurement
- Discussion with internal and external stakeholders, planning and taking care of the details once the specifications are finalized and schedule and scope is known, depending on project the tasks differ

**Figure 4**. Interviewees' responsibilities

In the basic information section, the interviewees were asked about their responsibilities. They are presented in Figure 4, and they are divided due to what team interviewee belongs. The interviewees answered with their own words how they would describe their responsibilities in their position. In the procurement and logistics team the responsibilities are mainly making purchase orders and tracking of invoices and deliveries. In the project management team, the responsibilities vary more, such as, implementing projects, handling the contracts, planning the details, and being the responsible of the budget, timing, and quality. Responsibilities are crucial to know when the communication challenges' root causes and priorities in execution process are discussed. Different responsibilities affect to the team's goals and what the teams prioritize in their everyday task.

## 6.2 Organizational management

Under organizational management theme, the questions about organizational structure and teamwork were asked. The interviewees were asked about their main objectives and support for teamwork, and whether they feel that their workload link to their responsibilities. With the answers can be concluded that the teams have similar objectives that direct their activities and trough the activities to communication. Also, it can be concluded that is teamwork operating well, and the roles are clearly defined.

Figure 5. The teams' main goal.

The teams' objectives differ from each other. In the Figure 5, on orange colour, procurement and logistics team focus more on deliveries and their success, and project management focuses more on budget and overall success. Some project team members might want to do anything to stay under budget, while others focus more on schedules. The question about the main goal of the organization caused uncertainties. Eventually, they all came to the conclusion that the main

objective of the organization is the same as that of the teams, or even the whole company as a whole.

So that the effectiveness of the team can be examined, the interviewees were asked that does the description of the responsibilities and position apply to their everyday tasks. Every one of the eight interviewees answered yes, but it was shown that people with more responsibilities might have more additional things to be sorted out. One interviewee from the project management team added that there might be issues or technical questions to which an answer must be found. Other member from the project management team added that communication with customer, external and internal stakeholders is an important responsibility. One interviewee from the procurement and logistics team answered that every single project, customer, and country is different which can cause confusion, but therefore it is crucial to have meetings and discussions with the project team.

The interviewees were asked about their teamwork, and do they get enough support from their team. All four interviewees from procurement and logistics team said that they get enough support from the team, and one of them added that supervisor often encourage to ask for a help and support. Also, project management team members feel that they get support, and one interviewee added that the help must be asked, and it requires open communication and delegation. One member from the project management said that mainly they work alone, and when the workload increases, they extent the day, but otherwise with more specialized things they ask help.

## 6.3 Communication

Under communication theme, the aim was to collect information about teams' communication competencies. The questions were about communication channels that are used and their effectiveness, intercultural communication, and communication culture in general in teams. With these approaches what things can be improved in everyday communication can be concluded.
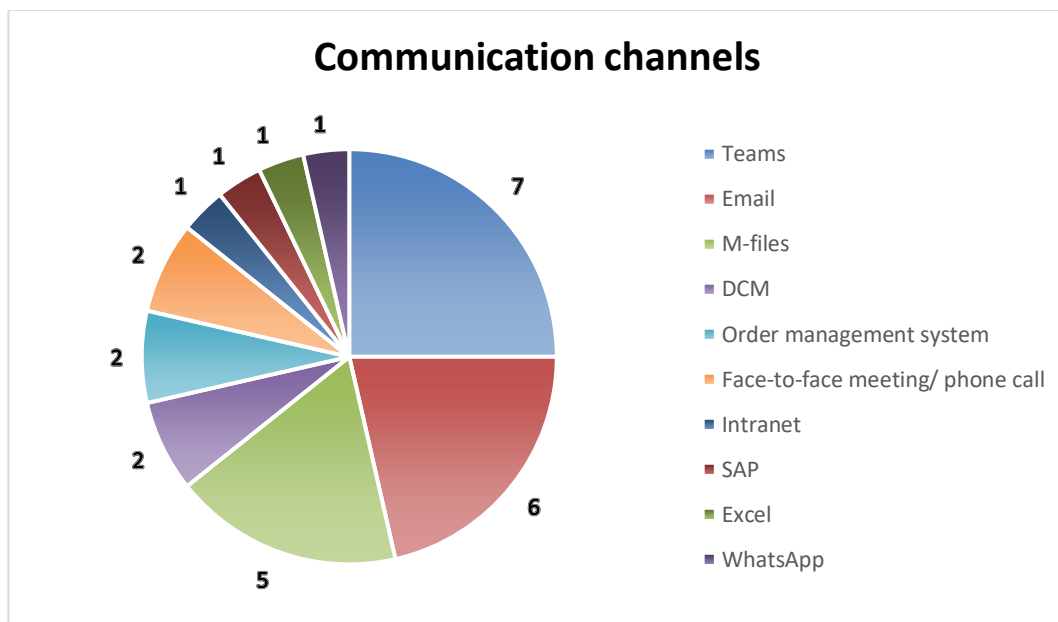
**Figure 6.** Communication channels.

The first question under this theme was about what channels are used to gather information. As seen on Figure 6, Teams is the most common communication channel. Seven of eight interviewees said that different meetings and internal discussions are the most usual way to get information, such as about projects. Secondly, there are emails, which is usually used to communicate with external stakeholders. The majority of the interviewees said that emails are the most important and main channel to use. M-files is an automation tool that is as a storage for documents. DCM is similar with M-files, but different project teams use different tools for documentation storing. In this scope, M-files is more common at the studied company and only two interviewee mentioned DCM. Order management system is company x's own system made for logistics stakeholders, and it is widely used by the procurement and logistics team because essential information about materials and deliveries can be found there. Face-to-face meetings and phone calls were not mentioned by many interviewees, but two interviewees preferred these channels because of their effectiveness and directness. Intranet was also mentioned by one interviewee, and different organizational information can be found there. SAP, Excel, and WhatsApp were mentioned by individual interviewees.

The question about the effectiveness of the communication channels generated a wide variety of responses. The general opinion within interviewees is that Teams is effectively used and a low-threshold communication channel. One interviewee added that Teams serves everyone more comprehensively than emails. One interviewee responded that M-files is not used effectively, and it is not a familiar channel, even if they have had training for it. The interviewee rather uses own files to collect project information. Email communication gathered criticism. There are usually too many emails, and the information overload they bring should be reduced. In summary, the use of email and other channels should be clarified and specified, and people should know how to use them. It was also questioned whether all members of the project team need access to all possible information.

Communication with other nationalities is fast and the flow of messages is higher than it is used to

The culture is different, and how they greet and contact you. They write differently, and are more business minded. At work the other nationalities can be precise and conscientious, and put a lot of effort into communication

Hierarchy shows more while working with other nationalities. Communication culture is different, and there is heavy emails and micromanaging. There might come the feeling that you are not part of the project team because you are told to do things

Cultural diversity is key aspect when the teams are distributed, so it is important to understand the cultural sensitivity of each. Each person or teams that they are dealing with, they eternally try to maintain certain basic customs, when it comes to greeting or speaking to people

Communication has to be adapted to the country you are in and you can not write in the same way for everyone, some people need to talk only about business and others need to tell you about personal life. There can be risk of misunderstandings, but it can also be a matter of personality

Sometimes there can be cultures or personalities that doesn't communicate, or comes late to the meetings. Some nationalities are more eager to use WhatsApp, and other are more straightforward to communicate. Adapting is crucial in communication with other nationalities

Other nationalities communicate more, faster, and more intensively

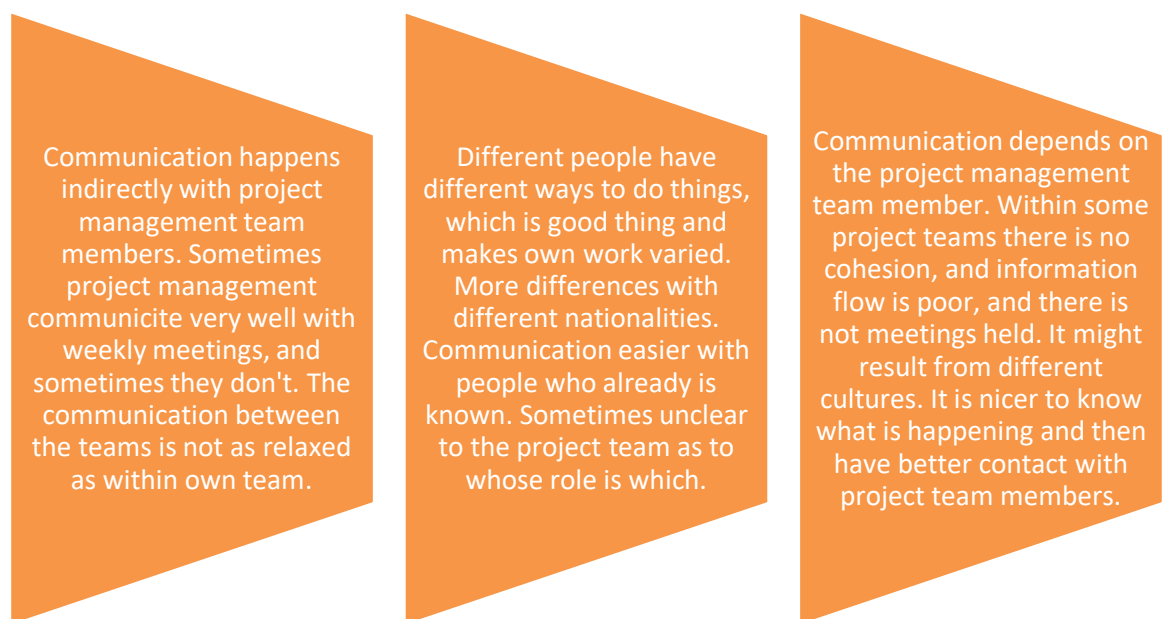**Figure 7**. Cultural diversity in communication.

The question about cultural diversity in communication were asked to investigate the cultural competence of the teams. Figure 7 shows the aggregated comments of the interviewees. Six of the interviewees pointed out the differences between communication styles, and what problems it causes. For instance, micromanaging and how many and at what rate the messages arrive. One of the interviewees added that these aspects affect whether you feel part of a project team. There was highlighted, how other nationalities are eager to use different channels than it is

used to. One interviewee focused on how to take every person from different nationalities in consideration and make every feel part of the project team. For instance, how to maintain and adapt certain customs, such as greeting people.

The last question under communication theme deals with communication within the teams. Generally every interviewee feels that the communication culture within the teams is open, relaxed, direct, and free. Communication flows from upper management to workers well and other way around. Three interviewees added that it is appreciated to receive and share openly information within the team, so solutions can be found faster and team members can learn from other's mistakes or successes. One interviewee added that within the team, there are too much information sharing, for examples changes in policy could be more useful through another channel.

## 6.4 Communication challenges

Under communication challenge's theme, the objective was to nominate basic scenarios of the challenges faced by the teams. Questions were asked about communication between the project management team and the procurement and logistics team, whether there were any misunderstandings and whether they had any suggestions for improving communication. After these questions, interviewees had a chance to add their observations based on these themes.

Communication happens indirectly with project management team members. Sometimes project management communicite very well with weekly meetings, and sometimes they don't. The communication between the teams is not as relaxed as within own team.

Different people have different ways to do things, which is good thing and makes own work varied. More differences with different nationalities. Communication easier with people who already is known. Sometimes unclear to the project team as to whose role is which.

Communication depends on the project management team member. Within some project teams there is no cohesion, and information flow is poor, and there is not meetings held. It might result from different cultures. It is nicer to know what is happening and then have better contact with project team members.

**Figure 8.** Procurement & logistics' view of communication.

Interviewees were asked to describe the communication between project management team and procurement and logistics team as seen in Figure 8. Some views of interviewees were linked to each other's, but Figure 8 shows three different responses put together from procurement and logistics team. In summary, there is place for improvement in communication, when talking about the status of a project. Lack of meetings, updates and clear roles are the key points from the gathered answers. There were pointed out, that knowing the other's team members would improve the communication and make it more relaxed.
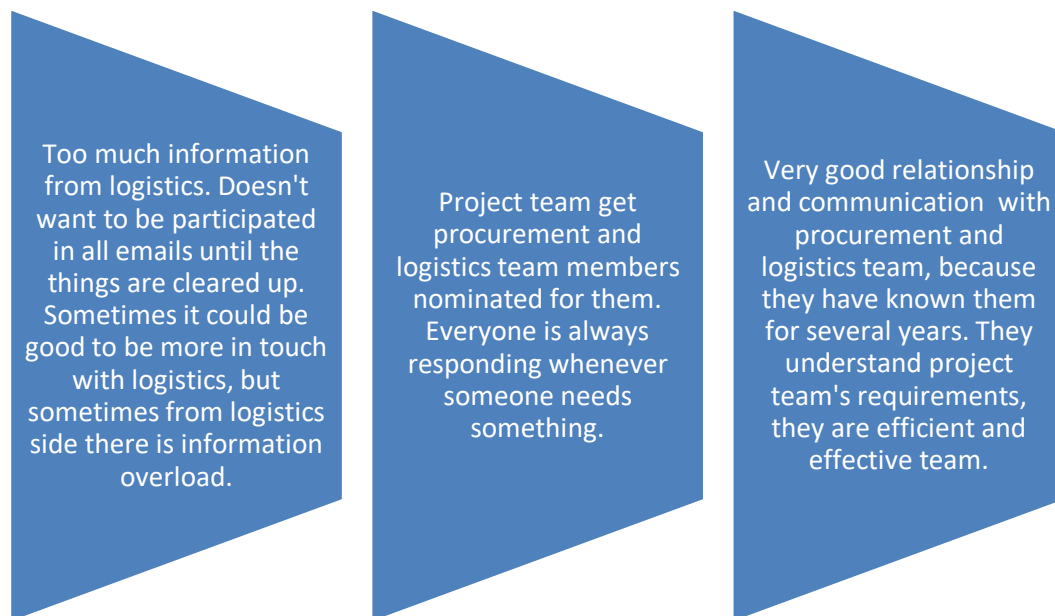
**Figure 9.** Project management's view of communication.

Figure 9 shows that the interviewees from project management were asked the same question, and there is more variation in their answers. One of four of the interviewees from this team answered that there is too much communication between the teams and there is information overload. Two of four answered that the communication is good, because they know the other team well and working with them is familiar and easy. One of four answered in more neutral way that everything is working between the teams.
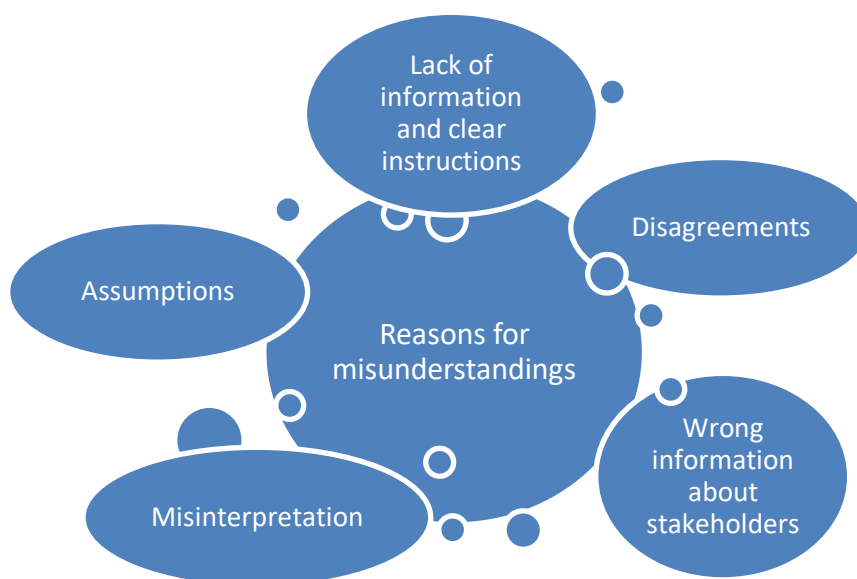
**Figure 10.** Reasons for misunderstandings between the teams.

The second question was asked to collect examples of possible scenarios of poor communication and their solution. Figure 10 shows the main causes of misunderstanding based on the responses, such as assumptions, lack of information, and misinterpretation. Misunderstandings can cause delays, near misses, and extra costs. The responses showed that the best solution is a discussion or Teams meeting between the parties. One interviewee added that if something has happened that needs to be sorted out afterwards, it is good to slow down and reduce the workload. Another effective solution is to improve the clarity of guidelines and planning.
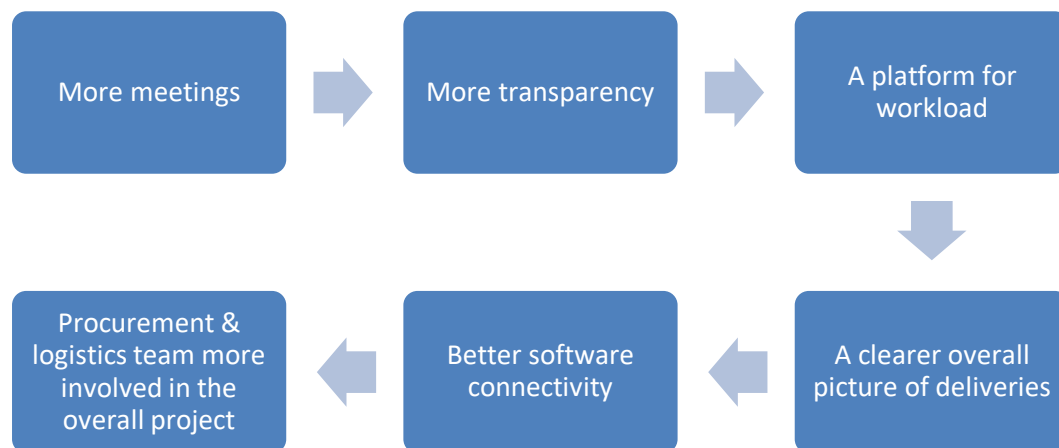
**Figure 11.** Suggestions to improve communication.

Interviewees were asked if they have some suggestions to improve communication between the teams. The aim behind this question was to find out if the suggestions are similar between the members or the teams. Figure 11 summarizes the responses of the interviewees. Two interviewees didn't have any suggestions, because they feel there is a good level of communication between the teams. Four interviewees of eight answered that they want more kickoff, follow-up, and weekly meetings to be held within the project team. Meetings would allow us to have better access to the decision-making process, and even if there are no updates for the project, the channel would be open to questions. One interviewee answered that transparency could be increased to avoid last-minute wake-up calls and surprises, such as late deliveries. A platform or forum to find out the workload of another team was one of the suggestions made during the interview. It would help to better anticipate and avoid rushing. The interviewee also pointed out that the overall picture of deliveries could be clearer. It was also suggested that the software could communicate better with each other and be simpler, for example in tracking deliveries. These could reduce the number of messages and improve the clarity of communication. Also, it was suggested that the procurement and logistics team should participate more in the earlier stage of projects, and not only in the end of the project.

At the end of the interview there was space for additional observations based on the themes discussed. Many interviewees are satisfied with the current communication and feel that communication has an important role to play, especially as remote working does not share as much information as working in the office. One interviewee pointed out that it would be useful to find a common line on the communication channels to be used. One interviewee suggested that a compiled file of all project-related information should be available for deputies, so that everyone is aware of project-specific policies and responsibilities. It was also added that the procurement and logistics team could be more involved in the communication between the project team and the client, which makes them feel more important and makes their work more meaningful. Openness and transparency were pointed out by one interviewee. If there would not be discussion about mistakes, other team members would not know how to avoid them next time. Everyone develops as an individual and as a team, when every experience, whether negative or positive, is shared.

# 7 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter the results of the study are concluded. There is discussion about reliability and validity of the thesis study, and value of the research and the further research. The aim of this thesis is to identify and address the communication challenges between the project management team and procurement and logistics team in order to improve collaboration and project outcomes. This chapter sets out the answers to the research questions.

## 7.1 Conclusion and reflection

The first question about the interviewee's responsibilities showed how comprehensive work they have, and what are things that need to be prioritized in everyday work. Project management has a wider scope of responsibilities because they handle the projects in their entirety. The procurement and logistics team handles the deliveries from suppliers to customers, what includes a wide range of tasks as well. However, project management members take part from early stages, which makes them tasks more comprehensive. From another perspective, procurement and logistics team members are part of several projects when project management team members handle usually less at the time.

When it came to the main objectives of the teams and the organization, responses varied both within and between teams. According to chapter 2, different objectives direct teams to different working methods. It is important to identify the objectives of other teams so that everyone understands how to balance with the different teams. Before the team can do anything, they need to have discussed and decided on its common objective (Chapter 2.2). Because of the confusion caused by the question about organization's main goal, it might be useful to define it more clearly to the members of the organization. Organization's operations are based on how to conduct its objectives (Chapter 2.1). Also, the teams should achieve their goals and successfully collaborate with other teams within the organization to fulfil the purpose (Chapter 2.2).

Questions about how the interviewees feel of their workload, and their teamwork were asked to view on the teamwork competence. According to chapter 2.2, if difficult tasks are divided and responsibilities are shared, teams can accomplish more in less time and with fewer errors. Cooperation can boost output and efficiency. It can be seen from the answers, that project management team members' workload is wide and could be more delegated to other project team members. It was positive thing, that every one of the interviewees felt that they get support from other team members. By leveraging the efforts of the whole team better results can be achieved, and employees' knowledge is improved, and stress reduced (Chapter 2.2).

Communication-related questions were asked to examine the background and draw conclusions about the communication competence of the teams. There were both written and spoken communication channels mentioned in results shown in Figure 6. Teams contains both as some interviewees answered the question specifically Teams calls and other Teams chats. In overall picture, interviewees prefer more written communication channels, as only two people mentioned phone calls and face-to-face meetings, and rest of the answers were written communication channels. According to chapter 3.1, face-to-face meetings have been shown to increase mutual understanding and they are more productive than emails, for example. This suggests that teams would certainly do well to increase oral communication in their daily work.

Communication through Teams is a tried and tested method, according to interviewees, and more effective than emails. An information overload of emails hinders communication between the teams and in general. Information overload increases workload, increases irritation, and reduces concentration. It is vital to consider the value and importance of both giving and receiving knowledge, as opposed to feeling compelled to tell everyone everything (Chapter 3.1). M-files was found to be ineffective, although the interviewee stated that it was a common
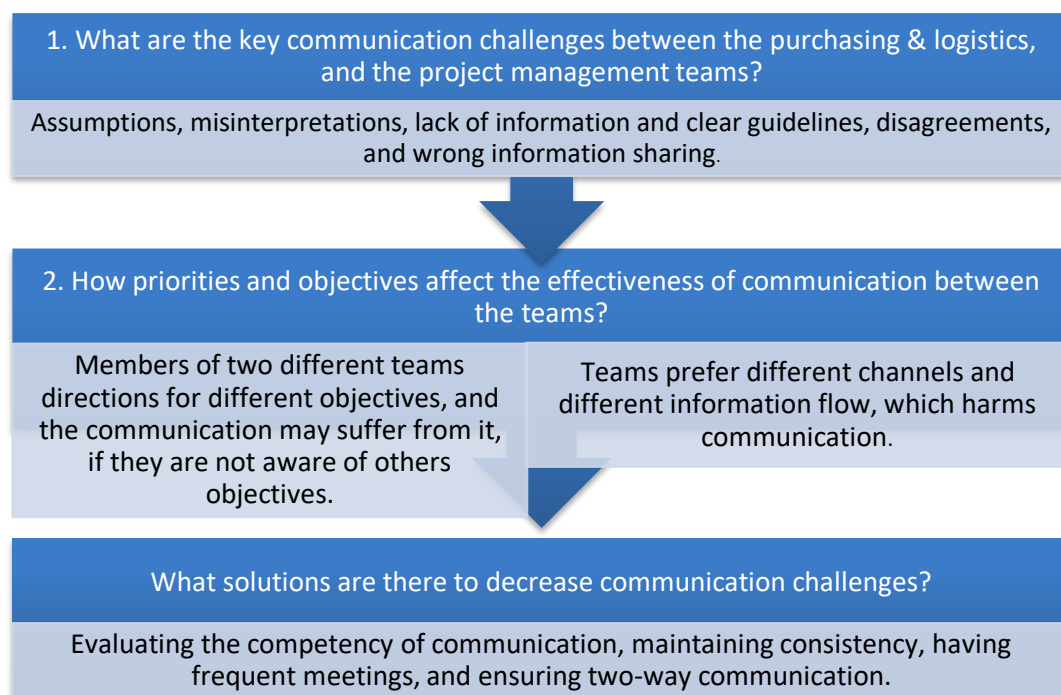
source for all information in the organization. How communication channels should be used should be clarified throughout the organization.

Cultural diversity was seen more as a challenge rather than an advantage in the results. According to chapter 3.2, there are three aspects of what makes culturally diverse team successful, and one of them is the actions to take to foster the cultural competence. Every member of the organization might not be familiar with other nationalities' means and norms, and that makes the circumstances unfavourable for all parties. Also, different power distances are shown in Figure 7 in the results. Different ways to give tasks and controlling other members task is way to show the hierarchy and being more task related. If it is used to doing free in, known as a lower power distance culture, the other way of doing things can feel indiscriminate. Also, uncertainty avoidance is shown, when interviewees said about different flows of messages and more intensive communication. In high uncertainty avoidance culture people minimizing difficult ambiguities is reflected in this kind of action (Chapter 3.2).

Communication within the teams was found to be open and relaxed. When the coordinating is on a good level, it fosters trust, cohesion, and competence within the teams (Chapter 3.3). This could be used for communication between the teams, which was described in the results as less relaxed and open.

Chapter 4.1 discussed that assumptions causes misunderstandings. There was same observation in the answers in Figure 10. Assumptions or stereotypes may lead to wrong conclusions. Individuals hear what they assume, and sometimes they rather assume than ask directly. Assumptions is then linked to misinterpretations. Misinterpretations can be due to cultural differences, and not knowing the other team members well. Lack of information and unclear guidelines may be affected by lack of standardized communication structure (Chapter 4.1). When the instructions are not clear, people do not know how to use right communication channels, or from who to ask depending on the problem.

Chapter 4.2 discuss that it is important to regularly evaluate the competence of teams' communication. Ignoring communication, for instance, could lead to improper communication habits that persist even in circumstances where they are unsuitable. Eventually, this causes problems with productivity and communication at work. From the results several suggestions to improve the communication can be seen. Maintaining consistency in communication efforts, scheduling frequent meetings, ensuring two-way communication, and creating a sense of value among employees are critical components of success. These resources can be used to engage more workers, facilitate better internal communication, and increase output (Chapter 4.2).

**1. What are the key communication challenges between the purchasing & logistics, and the project management teams?**

Assumptions, misinterpretations, lack of information and clear guidelines, disagreements, and wrong information sharing.

**2. How priorities and objectives affect the effectiveness of communication between the teams?**

Members of two different teams directions for different objectives, and the communication may suffer from it, if they are not aware of others objectives.

Teams prefer different channels and different information flow, which harms communication.

**What solutions are there to decrease communication challenges?**

Evaluating the competency of communication, maintaining consistency, having frequent meetings, and ensuring two-way communication.

**Figure 12.** Research questions' answers.

Figure 12 shows the response according to the research questions. The research questions were identified in the beginning of the thesis, and the answers are presented in this chapter. The first research questions about the key communication challenges can be derived from the results, which were assumptions, misinterpre-

tations, lack of information and clear guidelines, disagreements, and wrong information sharing. These are likely to be at the root of the communication challenges. The answer to the second research question about how priorities and objectives affect the effectiveness of communication can be found from several findings. Team objectives can influence communication and its effectiveness. If the objectives of the teams are not aligned, communication between them can be weak and conflicting. The channels used to contact other team members can also affect the effectiveness of communication. Some team members prefer different channels and may respond differently depending on the channel used. The final research question about solutions that can be found to reduce communication challenges has a clear answer. Assessing communication competence, maintaining consistency, holding frequent meetings, and ensuring two-way communication are useful solutions to decrease the challenges.

## 7.2 Reliability and validity

Every study attempts to assess the validity of the research being conducted. Reproducibility of measurement results and non-random generation of results are key components of study reliability. Reliability can be established in several ways, for example, when two raters come to the same conclusion, or when an individual is tested, and the results are consistent across rounds of research. Validity is another idea related to research evaluation. Validity is the ability of an instrument or research method to measure exactly what it is supposed to measure. Methods and measures don't always match the reality that the researcher thinks they are researching. As a result, the tool adds imprecision to the data. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2009, 231-232.)

In qualitative research, the concept of validity is not always clear. It can be argued that because every description of a person or culture is different, and no two situations are the same, established estimates of reliability and validity are not valid. Even if one does not want to use these terms, the validity and reliability of all re-

search should be assessed in some way. Qualitative research is based on descriptions of people, places, and events. Validity refers to the extent to which a description corresponds to the interpretations and explanations associated with it. An accurate description of the research method by the researcher increases the validity of qualitative research. Each step of the research process must be accurate, including accurate and truthful documentation of the conditions under which the data was collected. The length of the interview, interruptions, misunderstandings, and self-assessments must also be recorded. The same standard of accuracy applies to the interpretation of results. It should be made clear what the researcher is interpreting and from what he draws conclusions when drawing conclusions. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2009, 231-233.)

The results of the same study would probably change if it were conducted again at a different time. Interviewees may have different answers about communication as adjustments and developments are made to improve team communication. For this reason, it is preferable to assess the reliability of the study in terms of the researcher's actions, for instance, the extent to which the interview material was assessed consistently and the extent to which all relevant material was considered. Reliability in this study was assessed according to the researcher's ability to consider all the information offered by the empirical research material. Throughout the transcription process, the researcher carefully examined the interview by going through the content several times. It is therefore possible to conclude that the research is trustworthy.

The selection of themes and methodology for this research was informed by the relevant existing theories. The interview questions addressed the research topic and were directly related to the theoretical framework. Because the right things were measured and analyzed, this research is valid. In addition to anticipating potential errors, the researcher was also able to determine if a particular procedure was not optimal. As saturation was reached during the interviews, the result of

the study can be trusted. Despite some disagreements, there was a lot of repetition in the interview responses.

Research ethics, or good scientific practice, includes understanding the difference between plagiarism and appropriate citation, as well as respecting copyright. Throughout the research process, the researcher must become familiar with ethical pre-approval, general principles of human research, and good scientific practice and its associated obligations. Throughout the research process, the researcher must act with care, openness, and honesty. The thesis must comply with all applicable data protection rules and regulations. During the empirical study, particular attention was given to the handling of personal data and the protection of privacy. At no time during the research were the identities of the interviewees revealed. The results do not include the names of interviewees. It must be considered that the researcher has worked in the other team. This is an aspect that can influence the form of the interview body, and the answers, even if the result has been analyzed objectively. (Arene 2020.)

## 7.3 Value of research and further research

This thesis's aim was to identify and provide practical means to increase communication between procurement and logistics team and project management. Based on the study results, company x received qualitative information on how to decrease communication challenges, what are the key communication challenges, and how the objectives affect the effectiveness of communication. The results of this study can be utilized in strategic decision making and development.

Possible future studies could focus more on a specific area, such as the impact of cultural diversity on communication. There are many dimensions of intercultural communication that could benefit greatly from being examined in the daily work of employees. A better analysis of communication channels would also be useful for case company's organization to clarify general guidelines.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW BODY**

**Theme 1: Basic information**

Describe your position's responsibilities

**Theme 2: Organizational management**

How would you describe the main goal of your organization?

How would you describe the main goal of your team?

Does the description of your job apply to your everyday tasks?

Do you get enough support with your tasks from your team?

**Theme 3: Communication**

What communication channels are used to gather information?

Are the channels effectively used or is there room for improvement?

Describe how cultural diversity is shown in communication.

How would you describe the overall communication culture within your team?

**Theme 4: Communication challenges**

How would you describe the communication between project management and procurement and logistics team?

Have there been any conflicts or misunderstandings between the teams and how has it been resolved?

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve communication between the teams?

Do you have something to add regarding these themes?

APPENDIX 2
**TEEMAHAASTATTELUN RUNKO**

**Teema 1: Perustiedot**

Kuvaile työtehtäviisi kuuluvia vastuualueita.

**Teema 2: Organisaation hallinta**

Miten kuvailet organisaatiosi päätavoitetta?

Miten kuvailet tiimisi päätavoitetta?

Kuvaileeko työsi kuvaus jokapäiväisiä työtehtäviäsi?

Saatko riittävästi tukea tehtäviisi tiimiltäsi?

**Teema 3: Viestintä**

Mitä viestintäkanavia käytetään tiedon keräämiseen?

Käytetäänkö mainittuja kanavia tehokkaasti, vai onko niissä jotain parannettavaa?

Kuvaile, miten kulttuurinen monimuotoisuus näkyy viestinnässä.

Miten kuvailet yleistä viestintäkulttuuria tiimissäsi?

**Teema 4: Viestinnän haasteet**

Miten kuvailet projektijohdon ja hankinta- ja logistiikkatiimin välistä viestintää?

Onko tiimien välillä tapahtunut ristiriitoja tai väärinymmärryksiä, ja miten ne on

ratkaistu?

Onko ehdotuksia, miten tiimien välistä viestintää voisi parantaa?

Onko jotain lisättävää näihin teemoihin liittyen?