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**LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE IN MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENTS
A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN GERMAN-COLOMBIAN TEAMS**

MASTER THESIS

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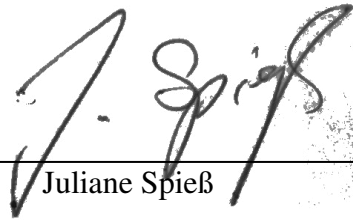|		
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DECLARATION

I declare in lieu of an oath that I have written this thesis by myself, and that I did not use other sources or resources than stated for its preparation. I declare that I have clearly indicated all direct and indirect quotations, and that this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for examination purposes or publication.

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural leadership is a topic a great interest in nowadays globalized work environment. Colombia emerges as an attractive marketplace with appealing business opportunities, especially for German enterprises. After presenting Colombia's current political, social and economic situation, the thesis elaborates the complex subject of cultural differences while focusing on the peculiarities of German and Colombian national cultures. The resulting implications for a team's collaboration and leader effectiveness are theoretically supported with reference to the landmark studies of Hofstede and GLOBE. By utilizing semi-structured interview techniques, a qualitative research enriches the previous findings and gives an all-encompassing insight in German-Colombian teamwork. The investigation identifies distinctive behavioral patterns and relations, which imply challenges and factors of success for multicultural team leaders. Finally, a categorical analysis examines the influence of cultural traits on team performance and evaluates the effectiveness of the applied leadership style.

Keywords: Multicultural leadership, cultural differences, team performance, leader effectiveness

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B	billion
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe
CLT	culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística
EC	European Commission
ELN	Ejército del Liberación Nacional
EU	European Union
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLOBE	Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness
IDV	Individualism index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IVR	Indulgences versus restraint
Ltda.	Limitada, Spanish abbreviation for Limited Company
LTO	Long-term orientation
M	million
MAS	Masculinity
PDI	Power distance index
SME	Small and medium Enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UAI	Uncertainty avoidance
UNCAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

US	United States
vs.	versus
WB	The World Bank Group
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
%	percent

ANALYSIS ABBREVIATIONS

C1	Company 1
C2	Company 2
FG1	Focus group 1
FG2	Focus group 2
P1 - 6	Participant 1 - 6
TL1	Team leader 1
TL2	Team leader 2

TABLES AND FIGURES

1. INTRODUCTION

The time has never been better for considering a foreign direct investment in Colombia. Country's safety situation has improved significantly, economy shows promising prospects and also social development programs were initiated to improve internal inequalities. Colombia pursues international trade endeavors in order to facilitate free movement of goods and services and to attract foreign entrepreneurs. By now, it is a member of well-known organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and further multilateral agreements among its neighboring countries as well as the United States (US) and European Union (EU) (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014).

Its geographic location favors the economic potential. The direct access to Pacific and Atlantic Ocean as well as its centrality between North and South America are important factors for foreign investment deliberations. The capital's airport El Dorado in Bogotá serves as a hub for both continents. All major cities, e.g. Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and American metropolis New York City can be reached within a few hours (Rybak, 2012).

Comprehensive infrastructure projects and rising private consumption offer attractive business opportunities in upcoming years. In the areas of mechanical engineering, building materials and transport technology, especially German enterprises will be able to profit from the economic process. Some, e.g. Siemens, decided to focus on this market region years ago and established subsidiaries or branches in the metropolitan area of Bogotá (Siemens, 2015). For business start-ups the German Colombian Chamber of Industry and Commerce together with its subsidiary DEinternational Ltda. provides consultancy advice and negotiating of business partners (Deutsch-Kolumbianische Industrie-und Handelskammer, 2014). Recently established firms are particularly grateful for this kind of service, because the assistance helps to adapt to an unfamiliar culture in order to learn how to do business in Colombia.

In this regard, not only time lag of business hours and language barriers may impede the course of business but also the differing cultures among personnel and organizations influence daily work on an international stage. Managers of multicultural teams have to consider sophisticated aspects of employee's cultural background. Since individual's performance is to a

great extent determined by the predominant culture and the local environment, leadership approaches have to be adapted accordingly. That includes recognizing both, differences and similarities. Understanding and moreover appreciating these characteristics enables to discern separating and unifying factors of a team's performance. This comprehension is a crucial necessity for cross-cultural management, encouraging leaders to face challenges, avoiding situational misinterpretation and eventually cooperating in a creative and successful manner (Hodgetts, Luthans, & Doh, 2006).

1.1.   Investigation Approach

In the course of this work a cultural study about German-Colombian team performance and applied leadership styles will be conducted.

By beginning with a theoretical introduction about the topicality and necessity of the subject-matter, the thesis subsequently describes Colombia's current economic situation and its relationships to the international economy, particularly to Germany.
Importance is placed on defining culture and relating issues based on the six dimensions of Hofstede's model of national culture in order to acknowledge similarities and differences as an important requirement to enable the cultural fit among diverging societies. By referring to findings of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, the thesis draws an overview about challenges in an intercultural team, i.e. the impact of the cultural variables on organizational processes and structures as well as leader's effectiveness and appropriate leadership styles.

The theoretical elaboration will be enriched with an empirical research using a methodology based on a qualitative ethnographic investigation. The *qualitative* research approach will enable an in-depth understanding of complex topics such as behaviors, beliefs, views and related actions and processes in the field of study (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Further, e*thnographic* inquiries are used to study the interaction between individuals based on their cultural background in a specific environment and allow a flexible research design that responds to the situational context of the setting (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the technique supports

the previous conclusions with practical experiences in the workplace, based on the assumption that relevant aspects, such as shared attitudes and situational understanding, are enclosed into categories.

The investigation regards three aspects of interest (categories) on two levels, namely focusing on culture, team performance and leader effectiveness from both, the management and subordinate perspective. In order to give an all-encompassing insight into the topic, thus, two kinds of interviews are envisaged: on the one hand, the conduction of a personal, semi-structured in-depth interviews with the team leader that is aimed to discover the leader's individual perceptions and experiences in the workplace that can be linked to his or her personal culture and professional formation. On the other hand, employee's angle is demonstrated by the mean of a focus group interview. Herewith, views and opinions are shared in an interactive discussion on a community level (Hennink et al., 2011).

The three categories above are integrated in both interviews in a logical, synchronized manner. Cultural traits were captured in individual question blocks using situational examples. The impact on performance and leader effectiveness was regarded individually for the respective trait. Allowing a categorical analysis, every section referred to the following aspects:

1. The existence of cultural traits related to Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions
2. The influence of cultural traits on member's and overall team performance
3. The effectiveness of the applied leadership style

Categorical analysis and the critical discussion of the research findings will emerge noticeable cultural influences on the applied leadership style and working performance as a source of difficulties or as a factor of success. A conclusion, based on the theoretical knowledge and the practical insights, measures the performance among German and Colombian employees and enables to answer the question if they are working as an actual team. Further, the analysis evaluates if leader's approach is effective and provides conclusive recommendations for leadership practices in order to handle challenging situations in an intercultural workplace.

1.2. Justification

In an attractive market place, such as Colombia, foreign investments are constantly rising. Principal concern for a successful founding of overseas business operations is the awareness and understanding of the foreign culture, as it influences the behavior and business practices considerably. Particularly, newly founded small and medium-sized enterprises often lack these kinds of experiences and seek for professional advice. Furthermore, situational behavior in social environments such as the workplace is mainly determined by perceptions and values of the employees and affects a team's performance tremendously. Since these attitudes originate in turn from cultural background, international leaders face the challenging task of unifying diverging cultures and enabling cooperation (Bachmann, 2006). Therefore, recognizing and dealing with intercultural differences is a topic of great interest for entrepreneurs in a new market.

1.3. Objective

Regarding the portrayed proceeding, research objective and corresponding guiding questions have been established as follows:

Objective:

To *identify* cultural traits within German-Colombian work environments and to *understand* their influence on group performance and leadership effectiveness.

Guiding questions:

- Which cultural traits can be identified within multicultural teams comprising German and Colombian employees?
- How do cultural traits influence the performance of team members?
- How are multicultural teams effectively managed and what is the most appropriate leadership style?

1.4.   Importance and institutional linkage

The thesis will be coordinated by Prof. Dr. Susanne Rank at Hochschule Mainz, University of Applied Sciences and Francoise Contreras Ph.D., Universidad del Rosario. It is assigned to the context of *Leadership and Organization* as a component of *Human Resource Management* in accordance to the equivalent course *Taller de Habilidades de Liderazgo* taught at the partner university Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia. Further, the study supports *Grupo de Investigación en Perdurabilidad Empresarial*, the internal research group of Rosario University's business school, in its investigation area of leadership.

In order to establish business contacts and conducting the expert interviews with German enterprises in Colombia, the German-Colombian Chamber of Industry and Commerce was contacted for advice and support. The thesis' study results will be available for the participating interview partners and their companies. Therefore, the thesis not only supports mutual cooperation between Hochschule Mainz, University of Applied Sciences and Universidad del Rosario in terms of knowledge exchange in the research field of Human Resource Management, but also extends the recognition of both universities in a network of internationally operating companies. It is imaginable, that the established contacts might flourish in long-lasting relationships giving both, companies and universities, the opportunity of offering internships or even job placements.

For the purpose of an overall understanding it was mutually agreed to use English as the common language of this work.

2. COLOMBIA TODAY: COUNTRY OF CONTRASTS

Surrounded by the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean and situated at the cornerstone between Middle and South America, Colombia provides a strategically important location for national and international trade. Moreover, the country is characterized by its high biodiversity and offers abundant natural resources.

Following Brazil, Colombia is the second most populous nation in South America. Since the Census in 2005, Colombian population grew by an estimated 12.4% to 48.2M and is projected to reach a population of nearly 51M in 2020. Population's majority (75.9%) lives in urban areas (The World Bank Group (WB), 2015c). With its 7.8M inhabitants, one-sixth of Colombia's total population resides in the metropolitan area of the capital Bogotá (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), 2014). In addition, megacities like Medellín, Cali and the conurbation of Barranquilla at the Caribbean coast emerged as urban junctions among the country.

Country's development is still severely impaired by the ongoing conflict between government troops and various illegal guerilla groups, such as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) or Ejército del Liberación Nacional (ELN). Although, previous endeavors could not accomplish ultimate peace yet, first achievements are recognized. The peace agreement of former President Alvaro Uribe's government and the paramilitary groups have led to a significant decrease of violence and number of rebels paving the way for formal peace talks. First peace negotiations between the FARC and the administration of President Manuel Santos started in fall 2012 in Havana, Cuba and dealt with questions about criminal prosecution, indemnification and land reforms. After five decades of war, which claimed the lives of approximately 220.000 persons and further counts another seven million victims by its negative consequences, international coverage considers the peace process as currently being in a "make-or-break phase". If negotiators are unable to reach a settlement and "…peace process were to stall or collapse before the end of the year, the conflict would again intensify and the Colombian government would have no option but to pursue a strategy of defeating the FARC militarily" (New York Times, 2015). Repercussion would be unbearable. Nevertheless, after the positive

achievement in March 2015, when conflicting parties decided to collaborate in the clearance of minefields, negotiations are expected to bring a positive end eventually. The EU and particularly Germany, support Colombia in this matter in order to progress peace and thus, social and economic development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), 2015).

2.1. Recent economic, political and social developments

Colombia's recent social and economic developments show a contradictory picture. On the one hand, future prospects for economic development are highly optimistic.

In 2013, nominal gross domestic product (GDP) mainly based on activities in the banking sector; services; retail trade; and manufacturing industry, amounted to 378.4B United States Dollar (USD) positioning Colombia in 31st place among worldwide economies (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), 2015). Also GDP per capita multiplied by two-and-a-half times in the past decade and represents an increasing private consumption (WB, 2015a).

The economy is growing dynamically by 4% annually with a continuing upward trend. From 2004 to 2007, the pre-crisis figure of more than 6% was even higher. In contrast to other vigorous Latin American economies, Colombia was able to uphold a positive growth of 1.7% when the international financial crisis caused a worldwide decline of GDP. In the aftermath, Colombia quickly resumed its pre-crisis performance. By surpassing the pre-year value of almost 5% in 2013, the country had the highest increase rate among all Latin American nations (WB, 2015).

Last year, unemployment rate was on a historical low since the beginning of the millennium and also inflation rate is stable (CEPAL, 2015). With an average age of 31 years, about 80% of Colombia's population is in working age representing a large potential workforce (DANE, 2014). Both, secondary and tertiary education level is high. However, there is the necessity of quality improvements, particularly in fields like mathematics and science education, as well as in research and innovation activities (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2014). Using

those macroeconomic measures of nominal GDP, inflation and unemployment rates, Colombia proves to be a country of high growth potential.

In the contrary, the still ongoing internal conflict to combat the problem of international drug trafficking and organized crime inhibits the overall national development tremendously. Particularly the rural population is severely affected by the armed confrontation and suffers from expulsion, poverty and enormous development deficits. The number of refugees within domestic boarders is one of the highest worldwide (BMZ, 2015).

According to United Nation Development Programme (UNDP, 2013), Colombia increased its Human Development Index (HDI) in the past thirty years by an overall 27.9% and holds, together with Ecuador, the 98th place of worldwide 187 countries. The rank categorizes it as a country of high human development. The HDI- index captures three basic components such as life expectancy, years of received school education and standard of living using Gross National Product per capita as indicator. Regarding the inequality- adjusted HDI (IHDI), which takes into account discrepancies in the distribution of income, health care and education in between a country's population, the value however falls to 0.521. This reflects Colombia's extreme regional inequalities of income and wealth distribution.

In a broader comparison, Colombia falls behind the high development group average of 0.735 as well as the Latin American HDI value of 0.74. The same picture shows when analyzing IHDI. Here again, category's average (0.59) and Latin American countries (0.559) occupy higher ranks than Colombia. Due to the considerably large gap between HDI and IHDI that generally exists among the Latin American countries including Colombia, structural imperfection becomes apparent.

The so-called Gini coefficient is another evidence for this inequality. The index measures how well household's income and expenditure is distributed within a country, by 0 signifying perfect equality and 100 being total imperfection of distribution. Although whole Latin America shows high Gini coefficients, Colombia takes the highest value (53.53) in South America (WB, 2015b). The significant augmentation of GDP per capita in recent years thus, did not contribute to the reduction of inequality. Consequently, the necessity of wealth redistribution is still prevailing to counteract the increasing gap between rich and poor. Further, Colombia lacks to

provide a nationwide social security measures, leaving a large part of the society with considerably high employment and poverty risk (WEF, 2014).

Lately, Colombian government has put focus on the importance of structural reforms. The National Development Plan commits authorities to reduce social inequalities and foster substantial economic growth enabled through education attainments and the termination of violence. Recent reforms e.g. the indemnification for victims of the conflict, land restitution and the increases in minimum wage are decisive actions against poverty and regional differences in development (Procolombia, n.d.).

2.2.　　International Cooperation

Despite infrastructural insufficiencies and political instability including the continuing armed conflict, Colombia successfully promoted its peace endeavors and has intensified its international trade cooperation in recent years. The country benefits from its strategic location and valuable raw materials, such as petroleum, carbon and gold. The macroeconomic environment remains on a healthy, stable level with a balanced government budget, controlled inflation and low unemployment (WEF, 2014). In the international ranking "Ease of doing business" Colombia indicates a favorable business environment for foreign entrepreneurs, providing high investor protection and lending accessibility. Among 189 observed economies, Colombia ranks worldwide 34th place, achieving the best result among Latin American and Caribbean nations (WB, 2014).

International business relations, comprising several regional partnerships with South and Latin American neighbor states[1], as well as free trade agreements with the US, Canada and the EU show Colombia's pursue for establishing an open and competitive market space. Further, the country participates in international economic organizations as an active member of e.g. the WTO, the IMF and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2014; Auswärtiges Amt, 2014).

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[1] Examples would be MERCOSUR, UNASUR, ANDINA, ALADI, Union Latina, CAN, AEC and Pacific Alliance

According to the latest World Investment Report (UNCTAD, 2014) Colombia has evolved as one of the main Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) receivers in recent years. The country belongs currently, to the twenty most attractive host economies. Whereas FDI inflows in South America generally decreased, Colombia demonstrated a reversed upward trend with an 8% growth equaling 17 billion USD. This positive development was principally evoked by the raised number of cross-border mergers and acquisitions by more than 50% in the banking and electricity sector.

In terms of foreign trade the US remain Colombia's most important trading partner, followed by the Latin American Integration Association and the EU (DANE, 2014). However, China, which currently ranks third place, is becoming increasingly influential and already represents Colombia's second largest source of imports (European Commission (EC), 2014).

Exports are mainly based on products from the mining sector. By totaling almost 60% the high need for economic diversification becomes apparent (DANE, 2014). Especially the commerce and construction sector, including transportation, offers considerable growth opportunities and will further enable a diversified economic portfolio. Economic growth, increased income and low unemployment enhanced population's purchase power and will give significant incentives for private demand and therefore, retail and wholesale business (Rybak, 2012).

Further, a new era of infrastructural development is imminent. Yet, regional inadequacies in this area are still a severe problem for Colombia's economic functioning. Recent tendering of respective projects also holds new business opportunities for foreign entrepreneurs. Amounting to 100B USD until 2021, the national infrastructure agency (Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura) plans an extensive buildout of nationwide undertakings. In the upcoming years it is projected to expand the road network, ports and airports, enable navigability of Magdalena River and revitalize the currently inoperative rail system. In this regard, especially building material, constructional equipment and technology will be of high importance and foster import demand (Schuh, 2014).

On 1st August 2013 the free trade agreement (FTA) between the EU, Colombia and Peru came into force. The extensive opening of the prevailing markets including tax elimination, enhanced transparency and business surveillance, is aimed to create stable investment conditions; and to protect human labor rights and enforces rule of law in order to shape a sustainable business environment with a high level of competitiveness, innovation and technological transfer.

Foreign trade volume with the EU reached 13.5B Euros (17.9B USD)[2] in 2013 (Boerse.de, 2105). Whereas mineral fuels and lubricant were the most important export goods and machinery, transport equipment and chemical products the most important imports (EC, 2014). With the successful signing of the FTA with the EU this number is intended to improve by 8% prospectively with "...direct positive consequences for local producers in the...processed agricultural goods sectors; for manufacturers of light industrial goods such as textiles, clothing and leather goods; as well as in the heavy industrial goods sector and mining" (EC, 2012, p. 3). Subsequently, the contract fosters European investments, particularly in sectors of raw material processing and energy production, infrastructure projects, manufacturing and service industries (EC, 2012).

2.2.2. Relationship with Germany

Germany and Colombia foster a friendly and co-operational relationship on the political, cultural and economic level. Main emphasis is put on topics related to development policy. Within the EU, Germany represents Colombia's principal trading partner in terms of exports as well as imports. Besides, the overall benefits of the FTA with the EU, German enterprises in particular will find improved business opportunities. Currently, chemical products, machinery and manufactured goods from the automotive and electronics industry are Germany's most popular export goods, totaling to a two-third share of overall export goods. By protecting intellectual and commercial property rights and an access to funding for research investigations

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[2] Historic USD-EURO exchange rate

and innovation the treaty also enhances the developmental conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and recently established businesses. The changing economic landscape will further raise the demand for German environmental and medical technology or other engineering industry products (Germany Trade & Invest, 2014).

Within the bilateral relationship, particular attention is put on the peace process. President Manuel Santos visited Germany shortly after his re-election in November 2014 when Chancellor Angela Merkel reassured Germany's continuing support in the peace process and other areas of cooperation, such as environmental and climate protection as well as scientific research (Bundesregierung, 2014). To confirm the given concessions, German development minister Dr. Gerd Müller visited Bogotá in the end of 2014 and signed the governmental agreement. With an amount of 327M Euro (434.6M USD)[3], the financial funds, related to development policy, shall be used to impose peace laws and regional reforms, as well as post-conflict actions and the compensation for victims (BMZ, 2014). The agreement will encourage a continuous close cooperation and strengthen mutual trust.

Regarding the previous evaluation of Colombia's economic potential and attractiveness for foreign and particularly German investors, the country's profile can be summarized in a so-called Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis:

Strength	Weaknesses
• Strategic location • Resource abundance • Young, educated workforce • Increasing consumer spending • Stable macroeconomic indicators • Openness to international trade and investment condition	• Inequality in development and distribution of wealth • Lack of nationwide social security • High poverty risk • Ongoing internal conflict related with drug trafficking and land expulsion • Insufficient infrastructure • High transportation costs • Deficits in higher education levels

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[3] Ibidem

Opportunities	Threats
• National Development Program • Comprehensive infrastructure projects • High demand in commerce and construction sector • Free trade agreement with EU • Bilateral cooperation with Germany • Positive end of peace negotiations with FARC	• Negative end of peace negotiations with FARC • Over-exploitation of natural resources, especially petroleum • Setback of commodity prices

Table 1: SWOT analysis of Colombia's economic profile

3. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKPLACE

3.1. Definition of culture

The theory of culture originates from anthropological studies. The concept refers to various casual relations and comprises extensive contents of meaning. However, for the purpose of this thesis at hand and the focus on leadership in culturally diverse teams, the term is approached in its ethnographic sense. The following self-generated definition of culture derives from several works in the field of study and shall guide the subsequent investigation and interpretation in the course of work:

Culture can be defined as the pervasive system of shared beliefs, norms, and values within a certain group of people or society that influences behavior and attitude and thus, social interaction. Culture is not naturally inevitable but rather learned, experienced and passed on to future generations. Embedded in traditions, rituals and symbols, cultural patterns are constantly reinforced and therefore difficult to change. Nevertheless, culture is adaptive and related values might develop over time (Hodgetts et al., 2006; Cullen & Parboteeah, 2011).

3.1.1. The role of values

Within one's social environment culture is commonly practiced in several ways. These activities are established in symbols, heroic figures and rituals and are collectively used among society. As the core of every culture values originate at the very early stage of cultural development and form certain patterns of behavior in a person's mind. Whereas practices might be easily changed, values are deeply founded in one's consciousness and often remain invisible, i.e. due to the omnipresence of culture and related values, individuals do not consciously recognize specific characteristics of their behavior within their usual environment. Certain attitudes are perceived as natural and will not be questioned. Only when encountering other cultures, differences become obvious (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

In individual terms, culture is an omnipresent power, acquired through experiences over the course of during one's lifetime as part of a society with various underlying layers. Thus, every single person is affiliated to several subgroups according to nationality, social class, gender, generation, etc. In multinational business operations culture manifests on three different stages: national, business and organizational/occupational, in which culture pervades from a macro to micro level (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2011).

Regarding the uppermost category of **national culture**, the above given definition is applied to the area of a state and its political frontiers. Within these borders, culture is determined by the most powerful part of society in political, economic or numerical terms and represented e.g. through the officially used language, education and legal system or a celebrated national sport. However, national culture oftentimes is composed of various subcultures. Based on factors such as geographical location or religious/linguistic or ethnic background, the communities enrich a country's variety in innumerable aspects of everyday life and form its identity (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Colombian subgroups are for instance the indigenous population with particular traditions and rituals. Another example would be the regionalism of "Paisa" culture. Comprising the area of the federal states of Antioquia, Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda, Norte del Valle y Norte del Tolima inhabitants of this region, so-called Paisas, are identified through their own customs, festivities as well as intonation patterns. Paisa people are said to be good businessmen, proud personalities with a proclivity for egocentricity ("Costumbres de los antioqueños", 2013, para. 3). On German national territory cultural differences are primarily observed between populations of either side of former inner-German border. Given the high influence on behavioral practices in the workplace, the thesis hereafter draws a general picture on Colombian and German national culture without considering secondary attributes.

Business culture concerns the general way of doing business within a country. "Each national culture produces its own business culture....In any society, business closely interweaves with the broader culture's values, norms and beliefs" (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2011, p. 41). Since national culture has a tremendous influence, business is generally conducted in the official

language of the country and determines negotiations, and business relations or etiquette. Subsequently, this business culture interweaves occupational level and within organizations.

Within professional groups, e.g. jurists, teachers, sales representatives, medics or craftsmen, certain behavioral characteristics derive from similar education and use of information. According to Hofstede, executed practices within occupations show more pervasive idiosyncrasies than the national culture (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Furthermore, prevailing norms and values affect principles of **corporate culture** and governance that are commonly shared by all members of the organization. Those are reflected in the form of e.g. decision-making, risk management, hierarchical structure, role expectation and leadership style. Nevertheless, in most international companies there is more than just one universal culture. Parent company's culture is not applicable to every subunit or foreign subsidiary. As employees' preferences and conditions have an important impact on performance and task achievement, organizational culture has to be adapted frequently (Hodgetts et al., 2006).

Given the influencing power of culture on all aspects of everyday life, including the work place, two empirically sound models, namely Hofstede's model of national culture and the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project were selected to identify sociocultural components of German and Colombian culture. The following presentation and application of these studies enable the further course of examination.

3.2. Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Based on deeply founded values, Geert Hofstede refers to culture as "…the collective mental programming that distinguishes the member of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.6) and "…the unwritten book with rules of the social game that is passed on to newcomers by its members, nesting itself in the minds" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.26).

The **model of national culture** enables to structure the wide variety of this "mental programming" and hence, provides a basis for understanding cultural components. It was

introduced in 1980 in his book "Culture's Consequences" where Hofstede, seized on four problem areas and empirically established a cultural **dimension** as a differentiating characteristic relative to another culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). The four value-based dimensions are *Power distance, Uncertainty avoidance, Individualism* and *Masculinity*. Due to constant research and increased number of investigated countries Hofstede defined *Long-term orientation* as the fifth dimension in 1991. In cooperation with his colleague Michael Minkov, the sixth dimension of *Indulgence vs. Restraint* was added in 2010 using data from "World Values Survey", which includes data from 93 countries (Hofstede & Hofstede, n.d.). Many further studies replicate Hofstede's pioneer investigation. In the course of this work, the GLOBE project as one of the most protrudes and extensive researches is given credit.

By referring to the information of Hofstede's latest publication "Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind", this section defines the six dimensions and explains their manifestation in a workplace context. Figure 1 gives an overview of the empirically found country scores in German and Colombian national culture.
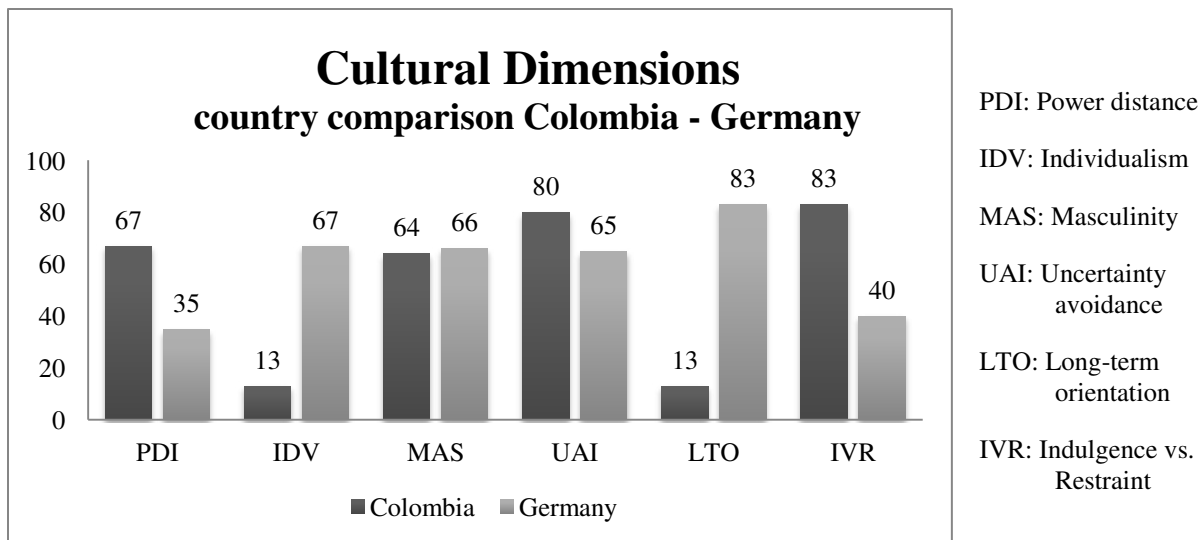

Figure 1: Ccultural dimension country scores of Colombia and Germany, adapted from Hofstede et. al, 2010

Power distance

The Power distance index (PDI) measures the degree of acceptance for unequal power distribution among members with low or no authority in organizations or groups of one country. High-PDI countries are characterized by large hierarchies and centralized power, which is also reflected in disparities in wage. An autocratic style of management including top-down communication is expected or even appreciated by the employees. Disagreement to authoritarian decisions is usually not expressed. Power distance therefore describes the dependency between authorities and subordinates as well.

With a relatively high score of 67, Colombia can be classified within the category of countries that accept existentially unequal treatment. Among other Germanic language speaking countries Germany is situated at the lower end of the scale with a PDI of 35. Generally, organizations are decentralized and low-hierarchical. Leaders are respected for their skills and expertise, not for authority and pursue an advisory or participative approach. In consequence, the manager-subordinate relationship is mutually dependent, and rather pragmatic than emotional.

Individualism

The dimension of Individualism refers to the self-conception of society members. Individuals perceive themselves as part of a community of high interdependence and unquestioned loyalty or rather act self-centered according to own interest and needs.
The low score of 13 defines Colombia as a very collectivistic nation. That means that nation's identity is shaped by a group dynamic, an affiliation to a certain group and loyalty. This influences the formation of opinions and decision-making tremendously. Establishing a personal relationship is of higher importance than task achievement and trust is an essential precondition for doing business. Leaders of collectivist cultures are managing a group, not individuals and decide according to a common interest in order to maintain harmony. In-group members are expected to be obedient, self-effaced and to restrain individual desires.

In contrast, Germany is an individualistic country with a high Individualism index (IDV) of 67. Activities are directed to personal targets and self-fulfillment. Loyalty and sense of belonging is determined by individually assessed importance or contractual relationship in the work place. In order to improve a person's ability to learn from its mistakes, criticism is believed to be carried out best in an open and direct way. This communication approach is contrary to the one in Colombia, where attention is paid to the fact of saving opponent's face. Thus, communication is context-rich and voluptuous and criticism is often conveyed through a mediator.

Masculinity

Striking characteristics that are considered to be dominant in behavior of males are competitiveness, striving for material success or achievement, whereas feminisms' is oriented in balance and quality of life. The masculinity dimension reflects to which extent society's value system is influenced by those masculine attributes and is exercised in a professional environment, i.e. organizational behavior. In the workplace, a feminine society is focused on solidarity, compromise and negotiation of conflicts. Rewards are based on equality, i.e. according to a person's needs, whereas incentives in masculine countries should motivate performance, job advancement and recognition.

In this regard, both Colombia and Germany are classified as masculine societies with importance on pursuing a career and target achievement. However, differences appear due to other influencing dimensions. In Colombia, competitive thinking particularly concerns challenging different (social) classes due to the high collectivistic consciousness. Group alignment should enable benefits such as status and success. In Germany, typical characteristics of male society are executed on an individualistic level. Self-confidence is built on personal result accomplishment and success, frequently demonstrated by status symbols. Whether it is based on common agreements or individual preferences, in German as well as Colombian workplaces, leaders have to assume the role of an ultimate decision maker and therefore, must be capable of being assertive.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) indicates how a nation is coping with future uncertainties and the related anxiety or threat. In high-UAI countries such as Colombia and Germany the need for predictability and interpretability is prevailing. Both countries show propensity toward avoiding unknown situations. The world is conceived as a hostile place, in which formal rules and laws structure social existence. In terms of working life, precise tasks, established goals, and fixed deadlines are expected and followed.

Colombia's high value of 80 implies a tendency to apply mechanisms in order to avoid ambiguity. The attitude towards changes in the course of action is inflexible and rather difficult. However, final (and possibly discretionary) decisions are made by power holders which might be in contradiction to the formerly established rules and adjusted to the individual purpose of the group.

Particularly in Germany, experience from former learning processes is crucial for dealing with uncertainties. This deductive approach substantiates the significance of a leader's power and responsibilities which he or she owns due to expertise rather than the hierarchical position itself.

Long-term orientation

This dimension describes the influence of a nation's history on its current and future situation. Whereas long-term oriented (LTO) countries reward future related virtues, short-term orientation fosters past and present related values. Regarding the attitude towards future orientation, Germany and Colombia differ significantly and show the greatest gap among all cultural dimensions.

Normative cultures like the Colombian, are shaped by its history and traditions and somewhat fundamentalist. Short-term orientation is reflected in work values that comprise freedom, achievement and self-responsible thinking. People are concerned with attending daily relationships, fulfilling social obligations and making positive contributions to society. Importance is put on leisure time and work-life balance. Consumer expenses and financial planning is focused on short-term goals and the tendency to save is low.

Germany's high LTO value of 83 mirrors a world view and adjusted behavior in respect to certain situations and its conditions, meaning it is a solution-oriented, subject-related and rational culture. Traditions therefore, do not have the same importance compared to Colombia. The awareness and acceptance of a constantly changing environment, i.e. considering the future as a long-term problem, manifests in a strong tendency to save and spare resources; and deliberate investments.

Indulgence vs. Restraint

The last indicator compares the tendency towards indulgence versus restraint (IVR). It measures the ability to control impulsive behavior and desires. Whereas in indulgent cultures the acceptance of expressive enjoyment of life and related emotions is high, this behavior is restrained by social norms in countries with a low IVR score.

Countries with a high IVR result, such a Colombia (83), demonstrate a low propensity of control and are considered to be indulgent. It is characterized by hedonistic values, optimism and the importance of leisure time which is reflected in short-time orientation and the attitude towards spending money. Germany scores relatively low (40) what signifies a somewhat restrained behavior towards showing impulsive reactions or desires. The general world view is rather cynical and negatively minded regarding future outlooks. Nevertheless, due to a high esteem of individualism, also Germans place importance on work-life balance.

In conclusion, Germany and Colombia show strong contradictoriness of the dimensions of individualism and Long-term orientation. Furthermore, differences are observed with reference to power distance and indulgence. Similar attitudes towards Masculinity and Uncertainty avoidance might not be as significant, as all dimensions are mutually influential. It is predicted that these inequalities will impact perceptibly the way of doing business in regard to managerial practices and a team's performance (Hofstede et al., 2010).

3.3.   The GLOBE study: Culture and leadership

Based on the assumptions that "Beliefs about leadership reflect the dominant culture of a country" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 331) and ideal leadership entails the shared societal opinion of exemplary behavior, the following chapter examines the cohesion of culture and leadership effectiveness.

In this regard, the investigative approach of the so-called Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study has excelled. GLOBE is a multi-country research, which was carried out in 62 societies[4], comprising almost 1000 enterprises with a total of 17,300 participants, i.e. leaders on middle management level. Initiated by Robert House in 1991, currently it is considered to be the most ambitious and comprehensive project, that investigates the relation between culture and global leadership (Center of Creative Leadership (CCL), 2014).

3.3.1.   Cultural dimensions and cultural clusters

As a precondition for measuring and understanding the influence of cultural variables on leader's effectiveness, practices and their further impact on organizational processes, House established nine cultural dimensions (Gil & Martí, 2011). Five of them emulated Hofstede's original dimensions by reusing *Power distance*, *Uncertainty avoidance*, distinguished between *institutional* and *in-group Collectivism (Collectivism I and II)*, redefined *Masculinity* into *Assertiveness* and *Gender egalitarianism* and renamed *Long-term orientation* into *Future orientation*. The two additional dimensions of *Humane orientation* and *Performance orientation* specify *Masculinity* (Hofstede et al., 2010).

With regard to the meaning of *Power distance* and *Uncertainty avoidance* Hofstede's and GLOBE's definitions coincide. Further dimensions however, were attached to a different implication. *Future orientation* focuses particularly on actions related to future events and does

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[4] GLOBE study differentiates rather societies than nations, since some countries demonstrate supranational cultures. Thus, Switzerland is divided in its French and German-speaking societies, Germany in its former East and West divisions, further French and English-Canadians, and black and white South Africans.

not value traditions or relevance of the presence. *Collectivism I* regards the sense of togetherness and spirit of community among the whole organization, while *Collectivism II* shows individual's bond and commitment to a specific entity and thus, the strength of in-group cohesion. Certain attributes of Hofstede's masculinity dimension are emphasized in several GLOBE measures. *Assertiveness*, for example, describes the degree of severity in direct, confrontational actions among society members. The pursuit of personal enhancement and excellence is taken into account in the dimension of *Performance orientation* and mirror stereotypical male characteristics, whereas *humane orientation* accounts for the femininity-side and refers to the rewarding of fairness, encouragement and generosity. *Gender egalitarianism* concentrates particularly on the reduction of gender role inequalities (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; CCL, 2014).

While Hofstede's model measures the *relative* differences between dimensions, GLOBE distinguishes societies in an *absolute* sense. Culture is either evaluated on people's assessment about "as it is", referring to social practices, or "as it should be", taking into account shared values and beliefs among entities. Moreover, the research was conducted in a two-level analysis, namely on societal and organizational stage (House et. al, 2004). Considering this specific approach as well as the deviating meanings of clusters, the research results of both studies cannot be compared (Gil & Martí, 2011).

Based on eighteen culture scores, i.e. nine dimensions with two evaluation criteria of "as is" and "as it should be", the project categorized ten clusters. Societies were affiliated to a certain regional cluster due to similarities in geographical location; climate zone; ethnic composition, as well as religious and linguistic roots (CCL, 2014).

Figure 2 shows the cultural clusters according to GLOBE, in which Colombia can be found in the Latin American section. Eastern and Western German societies are classified as Germanic Europe.
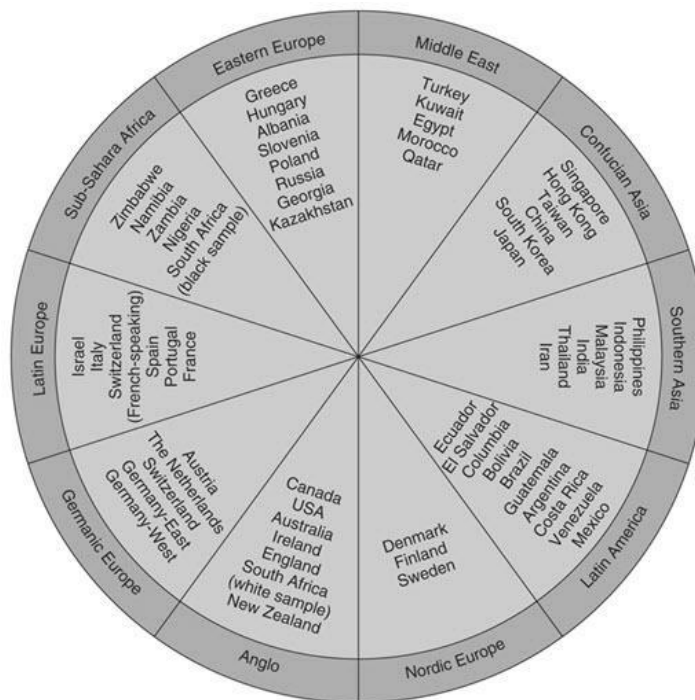
Eastern Europe
Middle East
Sub-Sahara Africa
Confucian Asia

Greece
Hungary
Albania
Slovenia
Poland
Russia
Georgia
Kazakhstan

Turkey
Kuwait
Egypt
Morocco
Qatar

Zimbabwe
Namibia
Zambia
Nigeria
South Africa
(black sample)

Singapore
Hong Kong
Taiwan
China
South Korea
Japan

Latin Europe

Southern Asia

Israel
Italy
Switzerland
(French-speaking)
Spain
Portugal
France

Philippines
Indonesia
Malaysia
India
Thailand
Iran

Austria
The Netherlands
Switzerland
Germany-East
Germany-West

Canada
USA
Australia
Ireland
England
South Africa
(white sample)
New Zealand

Denmark
Finland
Sweden

Ecuador
El Salvador
Columbia
Bolivia
Brazil
Guatemala
Argentina
Costa Rica
Venezuela
Mexico

Germanic Europe

Latin America

Anglo
Nordic Europe

Figure 2: GLOBE cultural clusters, adapted from House et. al, 2004

Germanic Europe cluster

Most of the Germanic European countries use German as a native language. Besides, the clustering derives from a shared historical context. The religious faith of Protestantism is widely disseminated. Orderliness, loyalty and directness are deeply founded values in society (House et. al, 2004).

Latin American cluster

Colombia, together with other Central American and South American countries is situated in the Latin American cluster. It is characterized by its history and influence of the Spanish occupying powers, i.e. language, legal and religious heritage and ensuing independency wars left indelible marks in nowadays culture. The affiliated countries share the common official languages Spanish or Portuguese and the widespread religious belief is Roman Catholicism.

Basic values of personalism, particularism and paternalism have notable implications in the workplace. Due to a high sense of solidarity, direct arguments and criticism are avoided in order not to affront personal dignity, resulting in a loss of face. Further, familiar issues are taken

into consideration when debating about employee's performance (personalism). Particularism is described as the right to make use of connections for one's personal advantage. At last, paternalism is the high valuation of intimate intra-familial relations or friendships. Persons outside this circle are regarded somewhat skeptically. In connection with the particularistic values, personal ties are thus crucial in the work environment (House et. al, 2004).

3.3.2. Societal practices in Germanic Europe and Latin America

In the proceeding of the investigation, the clusters were allocated according to their cultural scores (high, medium, low)[5] in order to predict inter-segmental mindset and common behavior (House et. al, 2004) Nevertheless, study findings also revealed the existence of subcultures which can be found among different clusters and are adjusted to specific attributes and circumstances (Gil & Martí, 2011).

Cultural Dimension	Clusters with high scores	Clusters with medium scores	Clusters with low scores
Power distance	X	Germanic Europe / Latin America	X
Uncertainty avoidance	Germanic Europe	X	Latin America
Collectivism I	X	X	Germanic Europe / Latin America
Collectivism II	Latin America	X	Germanic Europe
Assertiveness	Germanic Europe	Latin America	X
Gender egalitarianism	X	Germanic Europe / Latin America	X
Future Orientation	Germanic Europe	X	Latin America
Humane orientation	X	Latin America	Germanic Europe
Performance orientation	Germanic Europe	X	Latin America

Table 2: Cultural scores "as is" of the Germanic Europe and Latin America derived from House et. al, 2004

Table 2 shows the categorization of Germanic Europe and Latin American in which cultural practices are evaluated "as is". According to GLOBE, Germany and Colombia have

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[5] Based on a seven-point scale, the scores are ranked as follows: 7 – 4.5 high, 4.5-3.5 medium, 3.5 – 1 low

similar attitudes towards *Power distance* and *Gender egalitarianism* (medium scores) as well as *institutional Collectivism* (low score). Differences were observed in the *Assertiveness* and *Humane orientation* dimension, in which Latin America is affiliated to the medium-score column, whereas Germanic Europe has a high tendency towards assertive behavior and a rather low esteem for individual-related issues. However, differences are more distinctive in terms of *Uncertainty avoidance*, *Future orientation* and *Performance orientation*, dimensions of high importance in Germanic Europe. Latin America, by contrast, shows high propensity towards *in-group Collectivism* (House et. al, 2004).

3.3.3. Implication on effective leadership

Consequently, GLOBE study aims to detect characteristics of competent leadership. Every culture establishes its individual notion "…based on the premise that leader effectiveness is contextual, that is, it is embedded in the societal and organizational norms, values and beliefs of the people being led" (CCL, 2014, p. 3). These beliefs are further shared among the members of an organization and influence the acceptance and response to a certain leadership style. GLOBE identified 112 attributes that are positively influential and encourage employees to work expressively towards the progress and success of the company or a specific objective. Labeled as "culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory" (CLT), these traits were summarized into the 21 characteristics mentioned below. So-called first-order CLTs were subsequently evaluated according to their desirability on a seven-point scale. Mean values of all participating society revealed the following rank from seven, being the most universally desirably leadership quality, to one as the least universally desirable quality (House et. al, 2004; CCL, 2014):

Integrity	6.07	Modesty	4.98
Inspirational	6.07	Humane	4.78
Visionary	6.02	Status conscious	4.34
Performance-oriented	6.02	Conflict inducer	3.97
Team-integrator	5.88	Procedural	3.87
Decisive	5.80	Autonomous	3.85
Administratively competent	5.76	Face saver	2.92
Diplomatic	5.49	Non-participative	2.66
Collaborative team orientation	5.46	Autocratic	2.65
		Self-centered	2.17
Self-sacrificial	5.0	Malevolent	1.80

Further analysis of these 21 scales enabled to define six leadership styles (second-order CLT) that are, again based on a seven-point scale, assessed according to their ability to favor or hinder outstanding leadership. Conducive styles score within the range of seven to 4.5; evaluation of 4.5 to 3.5 implies no significant impact on leader's effectiveness; and obstructive styles are rated below 3.5 (CCL, 2014). Table 3 demonstrates the established approaches regarding their significance for regarding their significance for German and Colombian societies. For comparison purposes the mean value of both German society score accounts as one single nation.

Leadership Style	Charismatic/ value based	Team-oriented	Self-productive	Participative	Humane-oriented	Autonomous
Colombia	6,04	6,07	3,37	5,51	5,05	3,34
Germany West	5,84	5,49	2,97	5,88	4,44	4,30
Difference	0,20	0,58	0,40	0,37	0,61	0,96
Colombia	6,04	6,07	3,37	5,51	5,05	3,34
Germany East	5,87	5,51	3,33	5,70	4,60	4,35
Difference	0,17	0,56	0,04	0,19	0,45	1,01
Mean Difference	0,185	0,57	0,22	0,28	0,53	0,985

Table 3: Evaluated efficiency of leadership styles in Colombian and German societies, adapted from CCL, 2014

Charismatic/value based leadership and t*eam-oriented style* turned out to be internationally accepted and valued styles. Charismatic leaders excel due to their visionary, motivating and proactive style. Integrity, assertiveness, and progress orientation are important attributes of this approach. Team-oriented leaders pursue commitment, team performance, solidarity and collaboration. They are concentrated on integrating team members and coordinating tasks in order to work towards a common goal, and negotiate diplomatically (Gil & Martí, 2011). In Colombia, both styles are well respected with high scores of 6.04 and 6.07. Western and Eastern Germans also favor charismatic, value-based leaders. Thus, among all six leadership styles, this approach demonstrates the most similar valuation with the smallest overall difference between Colombian and German assessment. *Team orientation* in Germany is one of the most desirable styles. Yet, it is considered less effective as in Colombia, which is reflected in a higher difference in assessment.

Further, *participative leadership* is one of the most popular techniques in Germany which supports the principle of equal contribution in decision-making and task participation. Whereas Western Germans rated this style as the most desirable one (5.88) followed by charismatic, valued based management (5.84), East German society ranked last-named first (5. 87), and participative direction secondly (5.70). In Colombia it is the third most popular approach with a score of 5.51 and only a small divergence in evaluation compared to Germany.

Within German borders *humane-orientated leadership*s seems to have no significance for leader's effectiveness. In West Germany, it is evaluated below the 4.5 scale (4.44) and only with a slight positive tendency in the Eastern part (4.60). Compassionate, supportive and patient leaders that consider all the interest and concerns of its group members are favored by Colombian society.

The *autonomous style*, i.e. self-centered, independent and somewhat isolated behavior is obstructive for leadership excellence in Colombia, where collectivism and solidarity are of high importance. In German societies however, this approach neither has a positive nor a negative influence.

Reflected by a score below the 3.5 mark and confirmed by the small evaluated divergence, both Colombia as well as Germany regard *self-protective* as rather impedimental for outstanding leadership, in which leaders stress competitive behavior, concerned about individual status and the willingness to risk inter-group discrepancies in order to preserve own interests.

Recapitulating the depicted linkage between culture and leadership, GLOBE project's findings show a mutual approval of three leadership styles among Colombian and German societies, namely charismatic/value based, team-oriented and participative. Still, there is varying perception about the adequacy of the remaining approaches. These differences also affect the expectations of leader's behavior. Whereas trustworthiness, honesty and decisiveness are generally appreciated, other characteristics, such as formality, rationality and risk disposition are appraised quite differently among cultures (CCL, 2014). Hence, GLOBE study verified a significant influence of culture in the conduct of efficient leadership.

In conclusion, GLOBE research provides unprecedented insights into the complexity of culture and leadership linkage. Study findings are of high practical value in multinational

organizations, e.g. in terms of recruiting and expatriate trainings. It not only compares cultural profiles, but also fosters sensibility for adequate leadership behavior and thus enables an application of effectively corresponding practices within a particular societal context and international work environment (Gil & Martí, 2011).

3.3.4. Contemporary approaches on global leadership effectiveness

Nowadays, interest in leadership phenomena is greater than ever. A recent investigation by Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, and Hu (2014) demonstrated that the number of published articles in this field of research increased tremendously in the past fifteen years. The analysis collected studies of ten internationally regarded academic journals with the objective of bringing order into the multitude of theories. In total, categorization produced a number of sixty-six leadership styles, which are accounted as either established or emerging approaches.

In this regard, cross-cultural leadership as a yet established theory proves to remain a phenomenon of great interest, comparing leader's behavior across or in between cultures, universal necessities and respective characteristics of the leader (Dinh et al., 2014). However, Mittal and Dorfman (2012), both contributors of the GLOBE project, argued that present theories still fail to explain reasons for varying convictions about of effective leadership among societies. Yukl (2013) noticed further, that so far only little research effort has been made with respect to changing value conception and leadership behavior over time.

Moreover, Steers, Sanchez-Runde, and Nardon (2012) differentiated three movements of contemporary approaches about cross-cultural leadership. These universal, normative and contingent theories are presented subsequently and discussed according to their suitability in the global context.

3.3.4.1. Universal approaches

Advocates of universal approaches believe that certain behavioral models are culturally independent and therefore applicable all around the globe (Steers et al., 2012). Neo-charismatic leadership for example is an established category that continues to attract considerable investigative attention (Dinh et al., 2014). Two representative examples, namely charismatic and

transformational leadership, are generally considered to be of high influence for leadership effectiveness and thus, also relevant in an intercultural environment.

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership is characterized by an exceptional leader-follower relationship in which subordinates widely accept and adopt leader's beliefs as their own. This uncritical followership results from a strong influence and persuasiveness. Leader's particular power derives from the ability to convey an inspirational and often unconventional vision that is communicated in an eloquent, self-confident manner. Although enthusiastic-optimistic, the vision also reflects the willingness to take personal sacrifices and the expectation of followers to assume equivalent responsibilities. While stressing shared ideological values, charismatic leaders convince the team as well as individual followers of their unique capability for solving a task or contributing to work on a common objective and thus foster the sense of collective and self-efficacy. Further, leaders enable personal and social identification, i.e. member's emotional attachment with the superior and the group. This strengthens commitment and feeling of importance which eventually becomes inseparable from employee's self-esteem and need for admiration (internalization).

Persuasive power may entail positive and negative charismatics. Societal dedicated leaders are devoted to the common values of the vision and concentrate their influential power on enabling the internalization of the followers. Using measures such as devotion and commitment, the team is led by example and adopts these positive charismatics. Participation is reinforced by involving followers into decisions and authoritarian tasks. This clearly opens new possibilities of personal growth learning process, and the capacity of adjusting to changing environmental conditions. Charismatic gift usually shows in situations of radical change. However, well-functioning organizations might not be in need of a ground-breaking vision. Furthermore, unquestioned followership and unconditional adoration diminishes the objectivity to evaluate appropriateness and feasibility of a new vision. Resulting in overconfidence, leaders take high risks, underestimate threats and seldom admit mistakes. Aims to maintain power in order to follow one's own interests is a considerable risk of successfully executed charismatic leadership. With the ulterior motive of self-glorification, charisma becomes a manipulative

behavior which assigns little authority and participation in decision-making to subordinates, leaving them in high dependency on the leader. Employee's welfare and development are neglected. Formerly shared values or ideologies are abused for power expansion. Eventually, the omission to develop a capable successor on time eventually ends in a leadership-crisis (Yukl, 2013).

Transformational leadership

Transformational leaders are held in high esteem for their motivational aptitude. By enjoying loyalty and respect, they are enabled to mobilize team's performance potential and attainment of common ambitions. Followers might even be inspired to accomplish higher performance than expected.

Yukl (2013) defines four types of transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence
- Individualized consideration
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual stimulation

Transformational leadership uses similar influential tactics as charismatic leaders. Self and collective efficacy is one important feature of motivation, where follower's contribution and achievements are continuously encouraged and valued. Additionally, the visionary spirit should be internalized in subordinate's self-conception and be reflected in private interests. This possibly includes personal identification with the leader, as well. However, alterations are not just based on simple admiration, but further on leader's integrity, a trustful relationship, and the ability to animate followers intellectually or spiritually.

Even if authenticity and motivation are generally appreciated capabilities, they do not necessarily guarantee universal effectiveness. "A leader may influence followers to be more motivated, creative and cooperative, but what the followers are motivated to do and how appropriate it is for the situation are also important" (Yukl, 2013, p. 331). Possibly, transformation process is more feasible in dynamically changing environments. Furthermore,

employee's acceptance of leader's moral concept varies according to personally and culturally determined value proposition.

Both leadership styles show evidence of failure, because universal theories only emphasize some critical traits without considering important local beliefs that might differ from those conceptual key values (Steers et al., 2012). While universal contemplation put great focus on leader's persuasive power, it ignores the significance of reciprocal interaction and dependencies on situational aspects. Theories are thus, less generalizable as desired (Yukl, 2013).

3.3.4.2. Normative approaches

Normative approaches resume global applicability of universal theory but ascribe effectiveness to certain skills or behavioral traits, i.e. a limited number of specific characteristics that successful leaders all around the globe have in common and allow them to manage globally, such as cultural awareness; openness, curiosity and flexibility for unfamiliar situations, as well as devotion for the task objective (Steers et al., 2012). Hereafter, the two concepts of cultural intelligence and global mindset are used to visualize the subject matter of normativity.

Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence is described as a person's ability of effective performance under conditions that imply dealing with multiculturalism. Being culturally intelligent encompasses cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral conducts.

The cognitive compilation of knowledge about cultural diversity, support further processing of this information in practical application. Metacognitive practices allow to study and question differences in norms, values and perceptions across cultures during all phases of interaction; actively adapting behavior. Another important aspect is the possession of a positive attitude and openness towards new situations in order to amplify personal learning experiences, so-called motivational cultural intelligence. Last, conscious adjustment to the verbal and nonverbal language of the counterpart reflects a behavioral aspect of cultural intelligence.

If the team comprises several nationalities, diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations occur contemporaneously. Hence, leadership effectiveness is shown by the successful achievement of collaboration towards a common goal while using cultural intelligence (Rockstuhl, Seiler, Ang, Van Dyne, & Annen, 2011).

Global mindset

A mindset can be defined as the personal posture of how to perceive the surrounding incidents and how to react accordingly, i.e. a selective function determined by individual preferences and way of thinking. The term "global" embodies the consideration of unusual occurrences in the overall context of the organization that expands the mindset on a larger scale.

Rhinesmith (1992) specified six characteristics and related competencies that are distinctive for a global mindset. First, the permanent pursuit of knowledge acquisition and thorough analysis of the dynamics in the environment enable to establish a strong competitive position. By using analytical skills, intuition and the conceptualization complex tasks become manageable. Adaptability implies a flexible organizational culture that values process higher than standardized directives in order to respond to internal and external changes. Sensitivity is the capability described earlier as cultural intelligence that is necessary to lead culturally diverse teams. Assertiveness is another important aspect of managing uncertain situations without anxiety. Last, the critical assessment of one's own performance (reflection) facilitates learning processes.

A capacity successfully brought into action requires certain procedures that allow the transformation of a capability in a competence, i.e. "in the application of mindset to behavior, a global manager develops a competency" (Rhinesmith, 1992, p. 68).

3.3.4.3. Contingency approaches

In general, contingent theories imply that leaders adapt their behavior in accordance to situational conditions or vice versa (Dinh et al., 2014). In a cross-cultural sense, contingency refers to the dominant culture of a location which determines the effectiveness of executed

leadership. Hence, the leader has to be seen as a local manager whose acceptance is culturally influenced. The GLOBE study is regarded as one of the most important contribution to this conception (Steers et al., 2012). Specific characteristics of the directive styles were previously elaborated and will not be further described at this point.

3.3.4.4. New investigative orientation

By giving new impulses for the understanding of leadership effectiveness in a global context, Steers et al. (2012) suggest taking into account the following two aspects in future researches:

- Meaning of leadership as a cultural construct
- Variations in local expectations regarding leader behavior

Regarding the first aspect, investigation efforts need to focus on the diverging leadership definitions and tremendous differences in the meaning of those concepts. These relate e.g. to the transferred sense of hierarchical distance between leader and followers, the connotation that accompanies terms such as "leader" or "subordinate" in the literal translation of national language and the amount of people ascribed with executive functions (individual or collective leadership).

Further, the culturally-embedded causes for leader's acceptance are of high significance. Current theories mainly capture a one-sided view that is focused on leader traits and their effectiveness without considering the inverse impact of that possibly influences the leader himself (Dinh et al., 2014). GLOBE research already provided major insights into which kind of expectations individual countries have towards their leaders. However, further investigation should also regard the motives of those expectations and how these are reflected in the behavior of subordinates.

"In final analysis, organizations – public and private – will stand or fall based on the quality of their leadership"(Steers et al., 2012, p.482). Therefore, harmonizing this pluralism of constructs is one major challenge of future theories in order to allow new insight and develop a guideline for globally successful leaders.

4. TEAMWORK IN THE INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

4.1. Definition of team and teamwork

"Team" and "teamwork" are frequently used terms in nowadays work environment. In the progress of this investigation, the researcher decided to use the word equally as a synonym for "workgroup" or "task force", in order to avoid confusing the interview participants. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this work it is of importance to differentiate the concepts to evaluate whether the examined focus groups collaborated as a team and if the executives provided appropriate team leadership competencies.

In "The Discipline of Teams", Katzenbach and Smith (1993) criticized that "Groups do not become teams simply because that is what someone calls them" (p.112). They established distinct elements to identify a "real" team. These so-called "disciplines", listed in Table 4, are determinants of performance and success.

Discipline	Workgroup	Team
Use of members' skills	• Isolated use of skills	• Complementary use of skills
Accountability	• Individual accountability • Individual work product	• Individual and mutual accountability • Collective work product
Commitment and purpose	• Individual contribution to performance • Purpose corresponds to organizational-wide mission	• Individual and collective contribution to performance • Specific, task-related team purpose (common among team members)
Performance goals	• Indirect measure of effectiveness by referring to its influence on external factors (e.g. financial performance of the organization)	• Measure performance by referring to collective work product
Approach	• Efficient meeting: Discuss, decide, delegate	• Interactive meetings: Discuss, decide, problem-solving, planning ("Do real work together")
Team size	• Unlimited size (greater than 1 person)	• Limited size (2 to 25 persons)

Table 4: Disciplines of a teams, derived from Katzenbach & Smith, 1993

Whereas members of a team are aware of their specific, personal role and contribute to a fruitful mixture of e.g. technical or functional expertise; problem-solving, decision-making or interpersonal skills, these interdependencies remain unrelated in workgroups and employees rather work "individually in company" (Cardona & Wilkinson, 2006, n.p.). Performance outcome solely comprises the individual work products. In contrast, collective as well as individual work from team members total to a higher result. Due to shared responsibilities members also feel equally accountable for the overall performance and outcome. Collaborative assignments foster the commitment to challenging, usually task-related purpose. This commonly established purpose embodies related performance targets that differ from broad, corporation-wide ambitions, which working groups usually follow.

Cooperation among team members requires direct communication and information exchange. Thus, the size of a team is limited to a certain extent to which it is effectively able to operate as an entity. Larger accumulations of people face for instance logistic problems and are frequently forced to divide into sub-teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

To conclude, teamwork emerges when a limited amount of people use a common approach and the joint set of skills to pursue a specific goal-oriented purpose. Commitment and mutual accountability for a team's overall performance are the basis of group cohesiveness. Establishing trust and loyalty hence, is one of the most challenging tasks of team leaders.

4.2.   Team leader competencies

True team leaders need to facilitate teamwork, *not* individual performance. In difference to the strong leader role in working groups, in which tasks mainly comprise decision-making and delegating, team leaders become an actual part of the team and do "real" work. They don't claim for higher hierarchical levels and openly admit not to be able to provide all necessary capabilities and answers all the time. Team's success depends on the contribution of every member, especially when combined. This might also imply shared leadership competencies (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Thus, leader's specific role consists of establishing the above-mentioned common purpose and accompanying goals, while fostering team's set of skills and building trust and commitment among the members.

## 4.3.	Peculiarities of multicultural teams

The above mentioned criteria apply particularly to multicultural teams or task forces, resulting in an even higher importance of leadership.

Given their diverging culture background, group member's perception and values influence their attitude towards others and the behavior in social situations, e.g. the work environment. Thus, culture determines performance. Difficulties that arise due to cultural differences, such as miscommunication due to language barriers, misinterpretation of behaviors and lacking willingness to cooperate are negative effects of cultural heterogeneity in work groups. However, multiculturalism also provides a greater range of skills, capabilities and expertise offering creative approaches to solve complex problems. Team leaders face a trade-off between reconciling differing perceptions, without reducing the innovative potential. By focusing on shared values among the employees, the leader is asked to build group cohesion as a precondition for commitment and mutual accountability. Teamwork approach is directed to perception's consistency (Bachmann, 2006).

Consequently, leader's effectiveness depends highly on the ability to ensure a common understanding of how to perceive and interpret situations in the workspace surrounding and create a sense of community.

5. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1. Conceptualization and research design

5.1.1. Research objective and conceptual framework

Any research investigation ought to be predicated on a particular problem and a corresponding objective. In consequence, research design and conduct is determined by the search of information and its coordination directed to solve the problem and pursue the objective (Martínez Miguélez, 2006). The investigation envisaged for the thesis at hand refers rather to a problematic area than a particular issue. Key concern is the existence and impact of cultural traits within a multicultural work force consisting of German and Colombian employees. The research foresees potential difficulties or challenges in the performance as well as for the person leading this group. However, multiculturalism might also be a factor of success.

The problem related research objective has been established as follows:

The objective of this investigation is to *identify* cultural traits within German-Colombian work environments and to *understand* their influence on team performance and leadership effectiveness.

The objective yet reflects threefold dimensions of the problem. These are captured again in the leading questions that this examination aims to answer:

- Which cultural traits can be identified in multicultural teams comprising German and Colombian employees?
- How do cultural traits influence the performance of team members?
- How are multicultural teams effectively managed and what is the most appropriate leadership style?

Further examples of projected research questions read as following:

- Which of the identified cultural traits are predominating?
- Which challenges and advantages derive from group's multiculturalism?
- Is the interviewed group working collaboratively as a team?
- How does leader's cultural background influence the conducted style?

5.1.2. Methodology

According to the research leading questions and objective, methodology follows a qualitative approach. Qualitative studies refer to the interpretation of causes (why) and modality (how), i.e. the research aims to enable the understanding of underlying concepts of beliefs, preferences, perspectives, and convictions. It is usually conducted in the natural surroundings of the examined persons in order to understand external influences on the behavior, such as societal phenomena, values, norms, etc. For the investigation at hand, the participant's workspace was chosen as venue and reflected the usual place of interaction. Further, qualitative research follows an interpretative paradigm that acknowledges changing personal perceptions of reality due to environment's pluralism and complexity. Understanding participant's emic view or concept of truthfulness is the essence of qualitative investigation (Hennink et al., 2011).

By analyzing cultural influences on the interaction of individuals within a determined community, the used method is further classified as ethnographic (Creswell, 2009). Generally, ethnography intents to show the true nature or quality of the studied phenomenon related to a specific *ethnos*, i.e. a group of people that are united due to habits, obligations or in order to fulfill common tasks (Martínez Miguélez, 2006). Ethnography as an interdiscipline of anthropology illustrates person's perception of reality and logic reasoning, by exploring the predominance of shared norms and values, internalized by the community. It enables an emic comprehension of the mindset and lifestyle of the ones living in the observed culture and hence, serves also the purpose of qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2011). In this empirical, the ethnographic approach premises on the theoretical foundation of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and aims to depict an integral picture of how German and Colombian employees work together, with respect to their cultural diversity. It further supports the understanding of culture's

importance attached to task performance and leader effectiveness by unfolding a detailed description of the observation experiences. In terms of the projected target group the analysis is thus, exploratory.

5.1.3. Selection of data collection method

The selection of appropriate data collection method is defined by its suitability to connecting theory and practice in a meaningful manner (Hennink et al., 2011). Due to the close affiliation to the theories of Hofstede and the GLOBE study, research design follows a deductive procedure in which elaboration develops from a general understanding of culture to a more concrete contemplation using above mentioned categories and levels of analysis.

Consequently, the technique, on the one hand, had to enclose purposefully and logically the following areas of interest: the existence of cultural traits and their influence on group member's and overall performance as well as the effectiveness of the applied leadership style. On the other hand, the investigation regards two different points of view, namely the leader's and employee's perspective. Accordingly, a mixed method approach was chosen to capture the desired data. On the management level personal in-depth interviews were conducted whereas focus group discussions provided an insight to a variety into group perceptions. Both measures were used concurrently and demonstrated a comprehensive view of the areas of interest. The usage of a twofold, complementary research is further reasoned by Hofstede et al. (2010) saying: "...often the statements obtained from those who are led are a better reflection... than those obtained from the leaders. This is because we are all better observers of the leadership behavior of our bosses than we are of ourselves" (p.62).

In accordance with the qualitative and exploratory nature of the investigation, both interview techniques seek to provide the possibility to discover new insights, to add new, unforeseen ideas and explanations to the existing concepts. Open-styled questions were designed to emerge a particular course of conduct and in-depth understanding by considering the surrounding context (Martínez Miguélez, 2006). In subsequence, both data collection methods are portrayed while depicting respective advantages and the manifestation of categorical analysis.

In-depth interview

The first qualitative research technique is a personal, semi-structured in-depth interview conducted with the leader. In a direct, one-to-one conversation style the topic under investigation, i.e. the individual perspective about cultural determinants in the context of executed leadership style and work performance, is thoroughly contemplated. Nevertheless, data collection encompasses more than mere statements. While focusing on gestures and facial expressions, the interviewer receives more information. This kind of non-verbal contribution reflects emotions, feelings and an indicator for the interviewee's personality. By acknowledging these factors and adjusting the course of conversation, rapport is established.

Within a comfortable atmosphere the participant feels free to openly and genuinely share his or her personal version of reality using own parlance and phrasing. In order to ensure data's profundity and reliability, the interviewer refers to a semi-structured guide that serves as an orientation for the discussion (cf. Appendix A). It mainly consists of open questions which give space for voluptuous explanation, and reformulation (Quinlan, 2011). These questions shall not anticipate the projected answers but rather explore all conceivable answer possibilities. The tools may lead the participant to the desired information without limiting or even forcing a response. Thus, the method allows to gain an entirely new, unexpected insight which makes qualitative research interesting and valuable.

Interview guide

The interview guide leads through the conversation as a kind of checklist to exhaust all subjects of interest. However, semi-structuring allows certain freedom for alteration during the conduction itself as well as part of the research process from one interview to another, i.e. questions that do not provide the necessary deepness or clarity can be modified or even eliminated and replaced. Further, qualitative research does not necessitate the strict adherence to the question sequence since digression might be a source of valuable in-depth data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The guide comprises an introductory part in which the interviewer again explains the study purpose, the procedure, etc. The actual interview starts with several opening or "ice-breaking" questions, usually of closed nature, that initiate upcoming key topics and is aimed to learn about participant's personal antecedents. The straightforward style of these questions supports rapport building and thus, the readiness to talk (Hennink et al., 2011). In the study at hand, the participants were e.g. asked to tell about former experiences with multicultural teams and how long they have been engaged in leading the current one.

In the principal part the interviewer is entering the "exploration phase" as DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) call it. At this point, questions attain an in-depth level where the interviewee is asked to divulge personal insights. Rapport usually increases in the course of proceeding. During the "co-operative" stage the moderator uses different types of probes, i.e. simple, content-related queries to reinforce contents, verify answers and ask for practical examples that deepen the understanding. If the interviewee feels comfortable enough he or she may even take over the conduct of the interview ("participation") and voluntarily shares individual world view on the investigated subject. In occasions where the interviewee feels especially enthusiastic or emotional about a topic, it might happen that the researcher is involved in a dialogue and asked for the personal opinion. However, the interviewer's participation itself should always remain neutral and free of judgment.

In order to assure cohesion between the interview design and the research objective, the interviewer first had to identify the exact contents and associated formulation of questions to retrieve the desired information. In the case of this investigation, the main part embodies six key sections which are founded on Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions to reveal cultural traits. Subsequent questions and probes are used to investigate the influence of these traits on group performance and leader effectiveness. Hence, each division of the interview summarizes the three areas of categorical analysis, which in turn is beneficial, as every dimension is only treated once at a time and repetition of similar contents is avoided.

The interviewer completes by resuming especially striking facts and closing questions that gradually dissolves the conversation. These might be future-related or consist of some conclusive thoughts which the participant likes to share (Hennink et al. 2011). In the case of the research at hand, interviewees were asked to evaluate their personal leadership style and the

appropriateness for managing a multicultural diverse team. Finally, the moderator interviewee's appreciates the participation and offers the possibility to review the results in the aftermath.

Focus group discussion

The second qualitative technique, a focus group discussion, completes the investigation and enriches the predominant leadership view by an insight in the group members. Focus groups facilitate a profound collection of data within a range of diverse opinions. Similar to the in-depth interview, ethnographic analysis not only puts importance on what was said during the interview but also how the group debated diverging perspectives since it reveals information about dominant behavior of the community. By observing group dynamics, norms and values among group members become apparent and enable the exploration of related behavior in a cultural context. Thus, focus groups provide additional unique data on verbal as well as nonverbal aspects which cannot be retrieved in a one-to-one interview (Quinlan, 2011).

Discussion guide

The discussion guide for the focus group follows basically the same structure as the in-depth interview (cf. Appendix B). However, the question style was adapted for the purpose of discussing general opinions, whereas the group is seen as an entity rather than a selection of individual perspectives (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). As a consequence, situational examples were used to generate a broader view on the contents. By referring to a potential situation in the work environment, questions embody the above-mentioned cultural dimensions and affiliated attributes in a subtle manner. Another important aspect of discussion design is the applicability of the given situation for the sample, i.e. the questions consider the type of business, the sector of operation, etc. in order to establish a realistic example which participants can transfer to the circumstances of their company.

As the majority of the group members were Colombian, the guide was translated into Spanish to facilitate the conversation for the contestants.

In general, self-motivated interaction among the participants eases the role of the moderator so the session loses its strict question-answer dynamic and turns into a natural debate. Confronting opinions automatically evoke queries and profound reflection of the contents that might even exceed interviewer's anticipation. Since the focus group is discussing the issues according to their perspectives, the understanding for the prevailing culture improves and provides exclusive insight that cannot be obtained with personal interviews. Again, the interviewer needs to establish trust in order to create a sociable atmosphere in which group dynamics evolve naturally. Attentive moderators recognize quiet as well as dominant personalities within the group and encouraged or restrain participation accordingly. Understanding group dynamics also involves observing the behavior and gestures or body-language. To complete a comprehensive data set, also situational conditions like the location of conductance are acknowledged beside sole verbal utterances (Hennink et al, 2011).

5.1.4. Determination of population and selection of sample participants

Participants of qualitative studies are purposefully selected since their partaking has to ensure a valuable contribution. By using a non-random recruitment method the investigation is enriched with in-depth experiences and knowledge about the complexity of the phenomena (Hennink et al., 2011). Having clearly identified the field of interest, the conditions for the population of the empirical research at hand were determined as follows: **business nationality, type of business, time of existence, level of management, nationality of the leader, minimum team size and multiculturalism**. Consequently, the target population is characterized by the following attributes:

- Sample participants are employed in a German company which is engaged in an international business activity (e.g. foreign subsidiary or branch) in Colombia
- The company is a private business with the intent to realize profit
- The time of business's existence in Colombia shall not exceed five years
- The team leader shall be on a departmental level of management or in charge of a certain project with a maximum timespan of five years

- The team leader's nationality shall either be German or Colombian
- The objected team shall comprise a minimum of five persons, in which the team's compilation must comprise at least two different nations, namely German and Colombian

The minimum requirement of fulfilling five out of six given criteria was established to ascertain homogeneity among the sample participants. Furthermore, these "limitations" aim to guarantee information's suitability, richness and a certain degree of comparability among outcomes.

Considering the limited time frame, resource availability and the projected extent of the Master thesis, the interviews and focus group discussion were conducted in two companies. The number of sample participants amounted to seven focus group members and one leader, respectively.

5.2.   Logistics

In order to find German enterprises with business operations in Colombia, it was asked for advice and support at the German-Colombian Chamber of Commerce in Bogotá. Since many companies are working exclusively with local employees, this prior consultation was of particular importance in order to reach the desired population when contacting potential participants. After receiving the address details several businesses were approached via e-mail or by telephone. A brief presentation that included information about the research purpose, contents and projected methodology was attached to the e-mail or submitted on request. By referring to the contact person in the Chamber of commerce the respectability of the research project and a certain endorsement for the purpose of the work was demonstrated. In case of a positive response and willingness to participate, the companies were asked for a possibility to get to know the team and its leader personally before the actual interview session and further arranged a date and venue for conducting.

Following the invitation of the participating companies, the researcher visited the trade fair "Expoconstrucción y Expodiseño" on 22nd May 2015 in Bogotá. These preparing conversations offered the opportunity to give information about the study intention, regulatory

framework and length of inquiry. Further, it was of importance for the conduct to learn more about the companies' daily operations in order to adjust interview and discussion guide contents to the business context and ensure question's applicability. Moreover, this previous meeting facilitated to establish rapport during the final interview.

Due to confidentiality reasons no further information that possibly allow conclusion to the identity of sample participants will be given.

5.3. Execution

In preparation of the interview conduction, an e-Mail reminder was sent confirming the date and time of the appointment. The interviewer asked to bring an assistant to the focus group discussion to take notes of statements as well as non-verbal behavior and group dynamics. Additionally, both interview guides was attached for onward transmission to the team members.

On the day of interview, the interviewer initially gave a short introduction about the research objective, the course and projected duration of the interview. For analysis purposes, all participants were asked for permission to audio-record the conversation. Anonymization and confidential treatment of the collected information were assured. After overall agreement the employees signed a consent declaration of consent (cf. Appendix C and D). In case of the focus group discussion, the researcher also explained the assistant's function. Further, a copy of the previously sent interview guide was handed out in order to follow interview's structure. After clarifying final questions or objections the investigator turned the record device on and started the interview execution.

The first appointment took place on 10th June 2015. The researcher let the team leader decide about the interview order, who chose to start with the personal in-depth interview. The session was conducted in German, the native language of the interviewee. The focus group discussion afterwards comprised four people. The interviews with the second participating company followed the same order and were conducted on 18th June 2015. This focus group compiled three members.

During the conversation, the interviewer intended to maintain a neutral position in participation as well as the sitting position. Seat arrangement further facilitated eye contact with participants. Following the structure of the interview or discussion guide, the researcher was able to get an interesting insight in the work environment of both participating companies. The team leaders answered openly to all questions and allowed comprehensive understanding of their experiences. In the interview with the group, some employees participated actively, particularizing examples of their daily operations. However, other members did not show intention to enter discussion and answered only sporadically.

Due to the small size of the focus groups an actual discussion has been achieved only partially. However, certain topics such as cultural differences in punctuality, reliability and expression of emotions stimulated an active exchange of views.

During the course the interviewer intended to address all topics exhaustively, without exceeding the given time frame of maximum one and a half hours. After resuming and concluding the conversation, the researcher stopped audio-recording, again appreciated participation and offered the possibility to review the analysis results after completion.

5.4. Study limitations

Before presenting the analysis results, some reasons, which may prejudice the correctness and completeness of the data, are described. On the one hand, the interviewer was not trained. The preparations for the interview conduct involved the theoretical elaboration for this work and the consultations with the supervising professors. Yet, the researcher lacked practical experiences. Hence, it was not always possible to control group dynamics. For instance, reserved participants could have been integrated only occasionally and it is possible that some topics or aspects remained uncommented. On the other hand, the selected research method generally entails the risk of groupthink or social desirability bias. Interviewees might give an answer that coincides with the opinion of the social surrounding or what the person believes, the interviewer expects to hear (Yukl, 2013; Quinlan, 2011).

6. DATA ANALYSIS

After the data has been successfully collected, data analysis can be carried out. Still, the information needs to be brought into a uniform shape beforehand. Regarding the scope of the present work, transcription omitted a literal rendition of the interview and rather portrayed the statements in a shortened, simplified way in accordance with the structure (key sections) used in the interview guides (cf. Appendixes E - H). For comparability reasons, transcription was directly translated into English. Participant's statements hence, not necessarily correspond to a word-by-word reproduction of participant's utterances.

6.1. Categorization

In subsequence, transcribed data is aligned to the previously established research objective. For this purpose, the analysis is divided into three categories:

1. The existence of cultural traits related to Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions and their influence on

2. Team performance
3. The effectiveness of the applied leadership style

As described earlier, the design of the research instruments enclosed every category in an all-encompassing, logical manner. Data analysis however, tends to outline each category separately. Since the transcription followed the given order of the interview guide, participants' statements were allocated to the respective category in an additional column. To enable comparisons and interpretation of interviewees' statements, codes were assigned to similar interview contents. The coding facilitated a profound examination of how certain topics were discussed among the participants and also serves a clear portrayal of information (Hennink et. al, 2006).

Based on the previous theoretical elaboration of socio-cultural behavioral determinants, three attributes were associated to each of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Besides these deductive aspects shown in Table 5, additional characteristics were identified inductively by

closer data exploration and listed in Table 6. Sometimes, codes could not have been exclusively assigned to one single dimension and thus, recur in the analysis.

Cultural dimension	Associated cultural trait/characteristic	Code
Power Distance (PDI)	• Employee participation • Expression of disagreement • Hierarchical order	EP ED HO
Individualism (IDV)	• Group cohesiveness • Importance of personal relations • Expression/ Receipt of criticism	GC PR EC/RC
Masculinity (MAS)	• Personal fulfillment • Role of status symbols • Reward System	PF SS RS
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	• Anxiety about the future • Reliance on experiences • Confidence in leader	AF RE CL
Long-term orientation (LTO)	• Planning horizon • Role of traditions and values • Attitude towards time	PH TV AT
Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR)	• Expression of emotions • Disposition for additional work • Importance of Work-Life-Balance	EE AW WL

Table 5: Deductive codes for data analysis

Identified cultural trait/characteristic	Code	Associated cultural dimension
• Attitude towards performance	AP	IDV, MAS, UAI
• Cultural awareness	CA	-
• Duration of corporate existence	CE	-
• Duration of corporate membership	CM	-
• International experience	IE	-
• Job commitment	JC	IDV, MAS, IVR
• Job motivation	JM	IDV, MAS, IVR
• Mutual support	MS	IDV, MAS, UAI, IVR

• Leadership style	LS	-	
• Willingness for risk-taking	RT	MAS, UAI, LTO	
• Task allocation	TA	IDV, PDI	
• Duration of team existence	TE	-	
• Mutual trust and loyalty	TL	IDV	

Table 6: Inductive codes from data analysis

In the following, categorical analysis first investigates the overarching topic of cultural traits. In accordance to the main objective of this investigation, the manifestation of those characteristics is solely compared in between the participating companies. The influence of Germany's or Colombia's national culture is taken into account only partially, i.e. for the cultural dimension separately but not for their totality. The findings are further applied with regard to their influence on the two sub-categories of team performance and leader effectiveness. Each category comprises issue related statements of leaders as well as team members. Analysis shows that many statements often refer to more than one particular category. The codification hence, crystallizes relations, meaningful patterns or perceptions among different hierarchical levels in both companies.

6.1.1. Cultural traits

Power Distance

Since PDI refers to the distribution of power, employee participation rights were used as an indicator for evaluation. Whereas company two (C2) employs certain parameters to define decisional power, decision-making in company one (C1) usually entails a preceding brainstorming session to bring in ideas and agree on an optimal solution. "Smaller decisions", as referred by team leader one (TL1), are part of employee's personal field of operation and thus, becomes a duty. Otherwise, the ultimate decision is made by the leader or must be reasoned in detail:

"Everyone makes decisions according one's own work. If TL1 is not around, we make decisions solely....we use a manual to make the decision and hand in a final report, justifying why we made that decision, for what and how much time we will need to achieve results." (P1, PDI.1.)

Similarly, focus group two (FG2) often presents an already made resolutions that just need a final approval or signature. Team leader two (TL2) stressed to consider personal interests of the employees unless the decision is explicitly made on a higher hierarchical level with the general management. Despite specific managerial duties, TL2 intends to integrate as an equal team member:

"Of course, I am the leader but I see myself rather as a team member. Well, I have different responsibilities and tasks, but I always try to support the team within their projects and to avoid barriers between team and leader." (TL2, MAS.1.)

In contrast, the leader position in C1 is clearly demarcated. Within the team itself, hierarchy does exist, however it is rather flat due to the small amount of people. Participant 1 (P1) possesses an intermediate hierarchical role and takes care of business activities in case of TL1's absence. This participant also stated to express disagreement unreservedly towards the leader:

"Since we are a small team there are freedoms to say 'I don't agree with your decision.'...and we talk about it independently if it is a person with an inferior or higher position than you." (P1, PDI.3.)

TL1 took a contrary position, saying:

"People here would never directly say 'I don't like that. I don't agree with that.' This has to be figured out while listening." (TL1, IDV.2.a)

In C2, one person (P6) stated to express disagreement directly by referring to personal competences. Regardless the final decision of the leader, P6 trusts on TL2's foresight and expertise to make the right choice. Since the leader bears responsibility for the decision, it is not questioned.

In order to assess group cohesiveness and sense of community, the interview comprised questions regarding the meaning of interpersonal relations. All participants confirmed relationships being an important component of everyday work life, including daily conversations with colleagues. Even though focus group one (FG1) claimed to keep these relationships work-related, TL1 noted that the team members are well-informed about their colleague's private lives. The confidence towards the other team members in FG1 had to be developed over time by seeing work results. According to TL1, trust establishment still as being in progress.

In C2 the atmosphere at work was also described as friendly and familiar. Another evidence for team spirit is the existence of basic trust:

"I think that there is trust until it gets lost. I start working with all the necessary confidence. There is no reason to distrust." (P6, IDV.2.)

Interdependence in cross-sectional tasks is an additional indicator for group's cohesiveness in C2. Solidarity further derives from mutual support and representing a company as well as a country. Likewise, tasks are strongly interrelated in FG1 and members perceive cooperation as being part of a "chain" in which everyone provides a certain competency that cannot easily be exchanged. Thus, everyone is equally responsible for the results.

Both leaders coincided with the manner of expressing criticism. TL2 addresses the person directly, paying attention to a "diplomatic" way of criticizing. Even though criticism is usually handled differently in Colombia, TL1 believes that giving honest, straight forward feedback becomes more and more appreciated by the team, since it reduces insecurities about leader's satisfaction with job performance. This perception was approved by the team members during the focus group discussion.

When the interviewees were asked about motivational factors of job performance, TL1 appeared anxious about career. The importance of business' growth opportunities, best performance and reputation proved a clear focus on competition. Company's uniqueness was mentioned as particularly inspiring.

"What always motivated me was working for a world market-leading company.... It is great to have incredibly high potential and a lot to build up. There is barely a line of business or a brand that is able to accomplish such huge growth leaps." (TL1, MAS.1.)

Appositive to this observation, the team declared discipline, consistency and goal achievement as from the leader required characteristics. Regarding personal fulfillment, one member shared leader's view of earning a superior competitive position, whereas other members referred to "economic stability" (P2) and job satisfaction improving individual self-esteem. When asking about the role of status symbols, the majority of the group denied their importance. P1, typically the most dominant participant during discussion remained silent first. Upon request, P1 pointed out that the employment in the company itself serves a high status. The other team members agreed that the brand is highly recognized among their professional and private social circle.

*"*Name of the company* already gives a higher status, because of the high (quality) good."* (P2, MAS.1.b)

"In this sector we are well-positioned and this motivates." (P3, MAS.1.b)

In contrast, TL2 noted customer satisfaction and a comfortable working climate as crucial aspects for driving performance. This statement was approved by the team. Leader's recognition and opportunities for professional trainings or business journeys would further enhance motivation. Although FG1 mentioned similar rewards as FG2, commission was quoted as the preferential form of job acknowledgement.

Due to the market-leading position, TL1 and the team generally do not fear unknown business situations:

"In 99% of the cases our customers want to do business with us. That is always a good feeling." (TL1, UAI.1.)

Still, the team of C1 feels the need to prepare properly in order to meet the high expectations of the leader as well as the customer. Using systematic instruments, like checklists, is considered as a German habit.

"Here, like good Germans, we are very methodical....There is always a preplan before getting to the (actual) plan." (P2, UAI.3)

The topic about preparing negotiations arose a lively discussion about cultural differences. One local team member stated that meetings in Colombia are usually arranged "last minute" (P2) and thus, are fairly improvised. The only German group member explained repeatedly, Germans would not like surprises and feel the urge to plan meetings down to the last detail. Since this person had a token status within the group, this contribution seemed like a justification. Thereupon, another employee qualified the previously made statement, stressing that also Colombians "fully prepare" (anonymized) but focus on desired negotiation results rather than possible surprises. Since the completion of a deal requires several meetings in Colombia, preparation effort is in the beginning is reduced. Other team members affirmed this statement.

"Colombians don't expect a negotiation to succeed directly. We need much more time. The Colombian tries to become a friend or ally of the negotiator. That's why the result is not seen directly." (Anonymized, UAI.3.a)

On the contrary, due to the short duration of team's existence, TL2 cannot draw on many experiences and mainly relies on the mutual support within the team.

"Sometimes I am not able to help since I am also here for only one year. I try to give the team members the feeling to talk freely and admit if they don't know how they should do something. I also admit if I don't know something. So we can mutually find a solution." (TL2, UAI.1)

Nevertheless, P6 said to trust in the leader's professional competences and feels confident to face uncertainties. Whereas P5, the team member with the most work experience, is less concerned about unknown situations, the "youngest" member (P7) still prefers to watch the others negotiating in order to prepare and learn. Generally, FG2 agreed that the company of the leader or another team member fosters the feeling of security.

Long-term orientation

According to TL1, long-term orientation can be identified in the organizational values based on quality, durability and reliance. The leader's function further requires a strategic foresight. In operative business, FG1 works towards monthly targets and thus, a small planning horizon. The team leader affirmed the finding on short-term focus as follows:

"For them (the team) it is not that important what we are doing in 2017. No one is thinking about 2016 yet." (TL1, LTO.1.a)

Besides, participants justified their efforts are directed to the achievement of present-related personal goals, such as family and passion about the job contents. In regard to the influence of values, the majority of FG1 have never worked for a German company before and had to adjust their behavior to the corporate culture, e.g. in terms of punctuality. The group further mentioned loyalty, agility, and honesty as determining organizational values which are represented by TL1. In the individual interview, the participant named similar values that relate to an authentic leadership conduct and assurance of sustainable growth.

In C2, the employment also serves long-term objectives like career opportunities. However, tasks are rather short-term oriented. The working environment is influenced by the values of the (German) general management. Again, punctuality and responsibility were emphasized. TL2 considers the workspace as culturally "enriched" due to impact of the individual values that determine every employee's attitude. FG2 noted the necessity to internalize corporate values since the company represents a country (Germany) and has to comply with the general expectations towards this country. One team member clarified that this does not mean German values necessarily being better.

"We represent a country in a certain way. If we don't provide the (expected) quality for a service or product, the people change the opinion about our company but maybe also about Germany."(P5, LT0.1.b)

Indulgence versus restraint

For measuring indulgence or restraint behavior, participants had to comment their way of expressing emotions in the professional workspace. FG1 made a clear distinction between demonstrating emotions in the professional or private surrounding. Both team leaders stated to show emotions openly, sometimes even intentionally for motivation purposes. Due to the familiar atmosphere, TL2 did not show concern in letting the employees know about personal feelings either. The team appreciated this conduct:

"TL2 is also an emotional person. Since we are all like friends here, everyone speaks openly. I like that because it creates a good atmosphere." (P5, IVR.1.a)

Furthermore, the attitude towards work-life balance and the disposition to work overtime was used as another indicator for assessment. FG1 considered successful task achievement and job commitment as the top priority although it might imply working extra hours. Due to the feeling of responsibility, additional work is not regarded as something solely negative.

"If you want to deliver a good result it doesn't matter if you have to work at night or extra hours because it's yourself who wants to demonstrate the work." (P2, IVR.2.)

In FG2 the acceptance for overtime derived from the large workload the team faces. Further, participants set themselves high quality expectations. The habit of perfectionism, regarded as typically German, often entails more effort and expenditure of time. However, work-life balance was given more importance as in FG1, especially with regard to leader respecting stipulated free time.

In accordance to the previous elaboration, the investigator evaluates cultural dimensions in both companies as shown in figure 3. It has to be stated that the assessment of Hofstede's cultural dimension is based on a mere textual, qualitative analysis of the investigator and does

not follow the aspiration of a quantitative study. Thus, no numerical values are established, but rather a classification into low, medium, and high ranks.
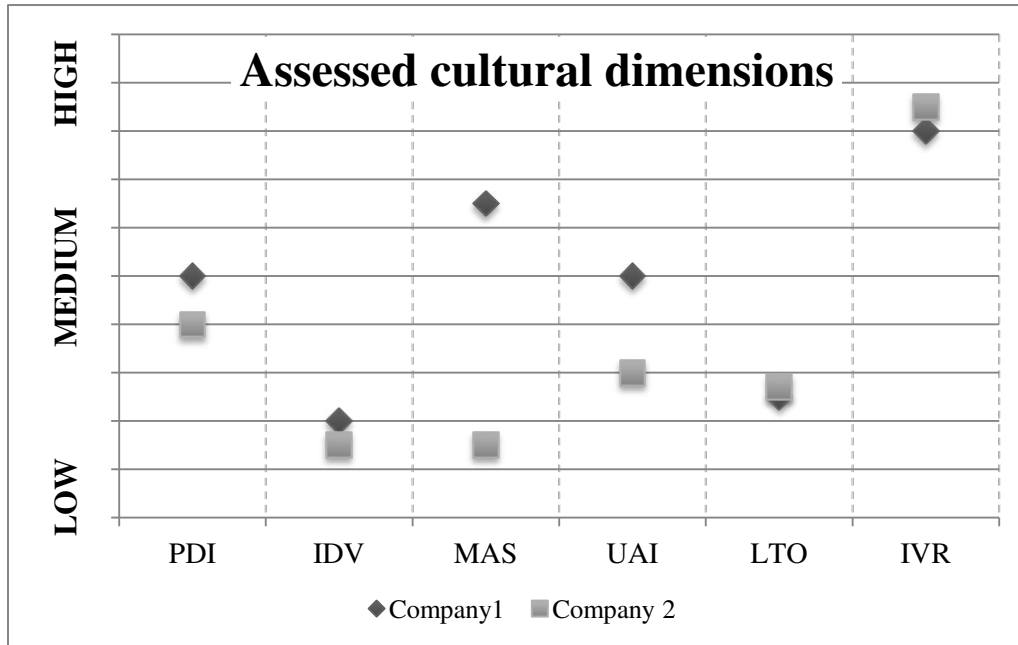

Figure 3: Assed manifestation of cultural traits in the investigated sample

Even though the last decision is generally made by the leader, both companies provide extensive participation rights for the employees. Dependent on the scope of a decision, the members are qualified to make self-reliant choices in their own field of action. In terms of hierarchy order, no differences exist among the team in C2. Also the team leader aims to be recognized as an equal group member. All participants stated to feel confident enough to express disagreement openly towards others including the leader. The interviewer noted further, that everyone in C2 used the informal German term "Du"[6] for addressing each other that indicates a lower hierarchical barrier. In C1, leader's position is significantly higher. Further, one employee (P1) has greater authority and decision-making power than the rest.

Mutual support and task interlinkage determine the close cooperation of both teams and imply a collectivistic mindset. Personal relations are of equal importance as task achievement. Those are familiar, yet solely work-related according to FG1. In C2, the team leader and members mentioned repeatedly being like friends. Group cohesiveness was further

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[6] German informal form of address for a single ("Du") or more ("ihr") persons

estimated to be a little stronger in C2 due to the unquestioned existence of trust. In the other team, confidence had to be earned over time. Only in terms of criticism, both leaders used a direct and hence individualistic approach.

In both cases, customer satisfaction was regarded as major reasons of job motivation. Besides, FG1 showed a masculine line towards performance possibly conveyed by team the leader's personal motives, such as claiming and defending the market-leading position. TL2 however, follows a rather feminine approach by emphasizing a pleasant working atmosphere and collaboration. Therefore, companies differed significantly in the Masculinity dimension.

Anxiety towards the future seems to be lower in C2. Based on the strong cohesiveness of the team, members rely on mutual cooperation in new situations. Further, TL2 encouraged the team to ask freely for advice or help. The tendency to avoid uncertainties in FG1 might relate to customer's sophisticated demand and by the leader required professionalism. These high expectations affected especially the Colombian employees in their behavior of preparing for unknown situations. While discussing the issue, the interviewer recognized a strong identification with the respective national culture as employees referred to the term "we". At the same time, team members as well as TL1 felt also confident about the future due to the well-established market position.

Both companies established a culture which corresponds to the corporate values of the parent, classified as typical German and thus, more likely future-oriented. However, strategy did not imply long-term targets. On the contrary, in the operative business the participating enterprises worked with tight, i.e. monthly, deadlines. Therefore both companies are ranked equally low in the long-term dimension.

Due to numeric targets, time limits and the overall workload, focus group participants confirmed working overtime being a regular and accepted part of their job. They commonly shared the opinion that the willingness for additional work in Colombia is generally higher than in Germany. As a result, companies adapted the concept of compensation. TL2 perceives sufficient leisure time as very important, however not always feasible regarding the amount of work.

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrated the significant influence of cultural traits in the work space. Although attention was paid to the comparability of the sample, differences in business conduct were found in the regarded enterprises. The biggest gap was observed in the attitude towards performance and goal achievement, more precisely in the masculinity dimension, whereas beliefs about the work-life balance and present-related goals gained similar importance.

6.1.2. Team performance

The second categorization elaborates the significance of the previous finding in relation to team performance. In subsequence, the investigator searched for evidence in the data to prove the existence of actual teamwork.

Both teams consisted of only a limited number of employees. Beside the four focus group participants in C1, the team comprises two more members. In FG2 one member was missing, so the team totals four persons. Since team size further impacts tremendously on cooperation, personal relations in the workspace and group cohesiveness, it is in turn a determinant for other teamwork characteristics.

FG1 compared the sequence of tasks necessary for goal achievement with a "chain" and "too complicated" for an individual person to manage. Due to strong interrelation, members have to communicate necessities of their individual job and trust in the colleague's skills and groundwork.

In the case of C2, team leader position was recently created. Before, projects were allocated according to the field of action and addressed individually. TL2 changed the focus to a collaborative approach. Project realization and success is accomplished when team members support each other.

"TL2 already has changed it a lot to the better. When I started three years ago, there was no boss. There was more competition between the project managers. It did not seem to work as a team. Now it changed." (P5, IVR.3.a)

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Furthermore, employees of FG2 deliberately chose the working environment for the cultural exchange. Background knowledge about German and Colombian culture and speaking the respective language are important factors to facilitate cooperation among the team.

As mentioned above, communication as a crucial necessity of team performance. TL1 still sees potential for improvement for internal, self-initiated team agreements. As C1 bases trust mainly on the results achieved over time, the team leader perceives confidence building as still being a process, but also relates this to the short duration of team's existence. Honesty is considered to be essential to create faith.

Although the youngest member of FG2 joined the team only a few weeks before the interview conduction, P7 experienced existing mutual trust and relates this circumstance to colleague's professionalism. T2 approved and stated to be confident about team's ability to perform without constant supervision or assistance of the leader:

"...the team works very independently actually and if I am absent for one or two weeks it's not like the team falls apart." (TL2, PDI.3.)

Similarly, TL1 expects the team to make self-reliant decisions regarding one's own professional development and the company. Both, the team and the leader feel optimistic about the future outlook. The company's reputation and the well-established product ensure an advantageous bargaining position:

"There is a lot of calmness." (P3, UAI.2.a)

TL1 approves this impression and answered with serenity that the members have developed to a team of professionals. By setting an example, TL1 transferred the know-how and prepared them thoroughly for negotiations. Delegating decision-making and responsibilities became a form of endorsement. The high business growth is seen as an evidence for the proper functioning of the team's common purpose:

"...we are on the same ground: we want to make business, we want to satisfy the customer." (TL1, PDI.2.)

Since FG1 focuses on a certain objective within a given (monthly and annual) time period, target accomplishment becomes a motivational factor. However, attention has to be paid

to thorough customer service in order to avoid harming the deal with overeagerness by pressuring the client to during the negotiation. As all participants confirmed, that business in Colombian is often based on emotions and usually completed within a determined circle of confidants. Hence, TL1 puts in charge the local team members to establish trust with the customers.

"Colombians are very emotional. Negotiations still persist on emotions and the relations are affected by friendships or the aim to make friends through negotiation." (P2, UAI.3.a)

Emotional influence on overall FG2's business activities is not as determining because the clientele comprises mainly German clients. However, the expectation regarding the accuracy and precision of a service is different, which might be difficult for a Colombian employee to fulfill. Eventually, customer satisfaction becomes the evidence and reward for good team performance:

"If they (the customers) are satisfied it means that we have done a good job, the team, myself and we as the company. And it's more likely that we are successful with our services." (TL2, MAS.1.)

"The best thing after a project is the (positive) feedback of the people, the satisfaction." (P6, MAS.3.)

In summary, leaders and the employees used the term "team" naturally when referring to their task force. In terms of group cohesiveness, the interviewer conceived all members being fully integrated, although in both focus groups one member remained mostly silent during discussion. This reserved participation might relate to hierarchical differences or missing experiences. Table 7 concludes the topic of team performance by referring to the team disciplines established by Katzenberg and Smith (1993).

Data analysis revealed a comprehensive compliance with the requirements of actual teamwork. Nevertheless, some areas for improvement were identified by the team leaders, such as group internal communication, arrangements and autonomy in C1. TL2 paid attention to enhance collaboration, commitment and mutual accountability for overall team performance, i.e. working towards a collective result.

Discipline	Company 1	Company 2
Use of members' skills	• Task allocation according individual skills and competences • Working as a "chain"	• Task allocation according personal interest or preferences • Use of cultural background knowledge and language skills
Accountability	• Individually accountable for personal task • Mutually accountable for overall task	• Individually accountable for own projects
Commitment and purpose	• Commitment derives from the common purpose of goal achievement and customer satisfaction	• Basic trust • Main purpose of customer satisfaction
Performance goals	• Numeric targets within a given time frame	• Project work with deadlines
Approach	• Communication, trust, goal-oriented proceeding	• Mutual support and collaboration
Team size	• Limited in size, six persons	• Limited in size, 4 persons

Table 7: Assessed disciplines of team performance in the investigated sample

6.1.3. Leadership effectiveness

For evaluating the last category, the researcher compiles topic-related statements that demonstrated current perception of leadership attributes as well as expectations towards effective behavior.

TL1 mentioned careful listening in combination with showing "real interest" as a necessary capability in order to build trust. Still, personal relations between leader and team members are kept on a professional level. This strict distinction between private and work space, is a requirement for effective criticism, as well. TL1 uses open criticism and constant feedback to manage team performance.

"...I have to keep my distance and only treat business issues. I am rather a coach who leads in the right direction." (TL1, IDV.2.b)

"As a boss you cannot be friends with everyone.... I am not the "best buddy" or colleague who is saying that everything's just fine. Like that, people are not advancing." (TL1, CQ.1.b)

In C2, feedback is applied as a medium for performance improvement, e.g. enhance motivation, acknowledge and to find out personal objectives of the team member. The group affirms that recognition in verbal form or showing confidence, e.g. by giving more responsibility is appreciated. The possibility for business journeys and further professional training measures are especially incentive.

The companies agreed that the hierarchical status of the leader is important in terms of external relations. One example in which the customer required to negotiate exclusively with the leader of the team was mentioned during the discussion:

"There are some clients, over all in Colombia; the boss has to go in order to have a stronger presence. It depends on the importance of the meeting....and the client feels better advised." (P6, UAI.3.)

Further, TL2 adopts an intermediate position between the team and the general management. The team recognizes the difficulties of meeting the expectations of lower and higher hierarchical level at the same time. However, FG2 noticed an enhancement of project realization since their ideas are supported and proposed by the leader to the general management.

"I feel that we (now) have a better relation with the general manager. The general manager respects TL2's opinion a lot and that helps to achieve things." (T5, CQ.1.)

In general, TL2 wants to be regarded as an equivalent team member and contributes to daily operations. Thus, hierarchical distance to the team is much smaller than towards the general management. In contrast, FG1 orientates performance towards the example of the leader, like following a role model and adopts certain forms of behavior. One example was mentioned in the context of expressing emotions:

"Personally, it motivates me, if people are trying to work against me. It drives me to maximum performance and I like to transfer that directly to the team. And apparently it worked well. It obviously worked out to be more emotional." (TL1, IVR.1.)

Moreover, TL1 built up a strong brand identity and conveys enthusiasm for representing the name of the enterprise. Leader's effectiveness in this regard was approved by the following, proudly quoted statement:

"We love *name of the company* and everything it brings with it." (P3, MAS.1.b)

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Giving performance rewards might be another indicator for effectiveness and job motivation. TL1 is aware that the team expects recognition of good work, besides sole financial concessions. Although positive feedback is passed on to the general manager, TL2 is wondering about giving sufficient appraisal.

In the closing questions of the interview, participants had to name important and appreciated leadership attitudes. TL1 described the personal leadership style as "demanding-cooperative". Repeatedly TL1 mentioned the aim to be a coach, who leads operations and transmits the best possible way of performance. Considering risks is crucial for effective decision-making. The team approved these statements:

"The leader must be willing to take risks. A leader is not only a boss, but also a teacher, a colleague, an example." (P1, CQ.1)

Following a "team-oriented" style, TL2 fosters mutual support and took into account suggestion and individual interest of the team members when allocating tasks. For being effective, self-confidence and professionalism is more important than always having an answer ready for every problem. "Moral support" is given to let employees find self-initiated solutions. The team confirms TL2's competence and stressed further, the importance of confidence the leader shows towards the employees:

"It affected me that TL2 already trusted us. If I see that my boss puts confidence in another person, e.g. adopts his/her opinions, etc. so I establish trust in this person, too." (P6, IDV.2.b)

In regard to the specificity of leading a multicultural team, TL1 considered empathy, patience and the ability to "read between the lines" as important. The capability of being a good listener was mentioned by both leaders. Further, cultural awareness and the willingness for understanding the other culture are essential in C2.

In conclusion, both leaders seem to be very effective in their approaches, even though differences in the way of exercising authority were observed. Both companies share deeply grounded values that determine daily business operations. Finally, the interviewer asked how participants like their leader position and received the following, satisfied answers:

"Great. I cannot imagine something different." (TL1, CQ.2.)
"I am very happy with that role..." (TL2, CQ.3.)

7. CONCLUSION

The previous analysis depicted that both examined teams are subject to the most diverse cultural traits. The impact of employee's national culture as well as corporate values results in a very team-specific culture. Since the aim of this investigation was to establish a substantiated description about the influence of particular cultural aspects on the behavior of the leader and employees, comparisons can only we drawn between both participant companies.

A particularly striking aspect of investigation was the strong brand identification of FG1. As they are representing a well-deemed German brand in their home country, especially Colombian employees feel committed and mentioned the company's name with pride. Employment also serves as a status symbol. The enormous success relates to the corporate values of the German parent, such as high quality standards and durability, which are transmitted by the charismatic leader. The market-leading position is associated with a very competitive attitude, however lowers the anxiety towards the future. Performance is oriented to the example of the leader.

Whereas employer attractiveness in C1 derives mainly from the reputation, the team members of FG2 searched intentionally for the cultural exchange in a diverse work environment. Team members provide comprehensive background knowledge of the respective opposite culture. Due to the short duration of team existence, mutual support is an indispensible part for group cohesiveness and was constantly promoted by the team leader. Besides, TL2 intends to keep hierarchical distance low and fully incorporate in the team – clear characteristics of participative leadership.

Both groups coincided e.g. in the expectation of the leader role being a coach or mentor. They perceive leadership as important and necessary to organize collaboration, indicate direction, prioritize and keep the focus on task achievement. Additionally, the external presence of leader's position appears crucial for dealing successfully with the customer, because in the Latin American market, statuses of negotiating parties have to coincide.

Moreover, companies do not only represent their own business but also a nation, i.e. Germany. Therefore, the team performance and outcomes have to comply with the general perception and corresponding expectations towards this country. On the one hand, this might be a source of difficulties for C1, since the team's majority is Colombian without former work experiences in German enterprises. On the other hand, employees are aware of the prevailing market conditions. Since negotiations are determined by emotionality and regional differences, establishing trust among the business partners is possibly easier for the Colombian team members. Confidence is further important in internal regards, due to interrelated tasks and mutual accountability for the work result.

The influence of diverging national cultures was also identified in certain attitudes towards daily operations, such as preparing for unknown situations. The only German member in FG1 occupied a kind of token status within the team. Thus, the leader faces the challenge to reinforce cultural awareness on both sides. The bicultural background of TL2 seemed advantageous to manage differences; however, cultural clashes may still occur. In these cases, the leader has to facilitate effective communication among the team and thus, improve the willingness to collaborate. Speaking the respective foreign language is a principal element to overcome cultural barriers.

Finally, the researcher evaluated both leadership approaches to be very effective. By focusing on over-arching values of both cultures that further conform to the corporate concept, leaders were able to reinforce group cohesiveness. Especially honesty, authenticity, reliability and job commitment were considered to be of high importance in the investigated teams.

Although multicultural teamwork involves several challenges, international leaders are able to transform sources of difficulties into success factors, by and promoting cultural understanding and appreciate diversity. Communication remains the key for cooperation and shall be directed to a common purpose and target achievement.

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Universidad del Rosario

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LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE IN MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS
A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN GERMAN-COLOMBIAN TEAMS

MASTER THESIS

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