
INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN MULTINATIONAL
ENTERPRISES – A study on how tech multinational enterprises are managing
diversity

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“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.”, Socrates

Abstract

This study examines the way that tech multinational enterprises are managing diversity through intercultural management at the level of multicultural teams. The literature review analyzes the concept of intercultural management, its methods, tools, best practices, and challenges, and argues the relevance of this type of management for the efficient performance of international organizations. The field search was undertaken through an online questionnaire that aimed at comprehending the managers and members of intercultural teams' understanding of intercultural management and its ongoing practices in their organizations. A total of 14 managers and 27 members of multicultural teams from 38 tech multinational enterprises undertook the questionnaire, composed of open and closed questions. The main findings suggest there is a major lack of training in intercultural management in these companies. Even without training, managers and team members are aware of intercultural management, of its importance, and show interest in learning. There are some good practices of intercultural management in use, which mostly originate from pragmatism and common sense. Both managers and team members think of multicultural teams as an opportunity for companies and more innovative in problem-solving. It is suggested that the reinforcement of intercultural management training, through its methods, tools, and best practices, would increase the teams' performance on tech multinational enterprises.

Keywords: Intercultural management; multicultural teams; international human resource management; cross-cultural management; multinational enterprises; international business; tech enterprises; tech multinational enterprises.

Resumo

Este estudo analisa a maneira como as multinacionais tecnológicas estão a gerir a sua diversidade através da gestão intercultural, atendendo à perspetiva de gestores e membros de equipas multiculturais da área. A revisão bibliográfica analisa o conceito de gestão intercultural, os seus métodos, ferramentas, melhores práticas e desafios, e defende a relevância deste tipo de gestão para o desempenho eficiente das organizações internacionais. A pesquisa de campo foi realizada através de um questionário online, composto por perguntas abertas e fechadas, que visou compreender o nível de entendimento dos gestores e membros de equipas multiculturais acerca do conceito de gestão intercultural e das práticas em curso nas suas organizações. Responderam ao questionário um total de 14 gestores e 27 membros de equipas multiculturais de 38 multinacionais tecnológicas. Conclui-se que existe um grande défice de formação na área de gestão intercultural nestas empresas. Mesmo sem formação, os gestores e membros de equipa estão conscientes do conceito de gestão intercultural, da sua importância e demonstram interesse em aprofundar conhecimentos. Existem algumas boas práticas de gestão intercultural em uso nestas empresas, sendo que a sua maioria advém de pragmatismo e senso comum, não de conhecimento teórico. Tanto os gestores como os membros das equipas pensam nas equipas multiculturais como uma oportunidade para as empresas e como sendo mais inovadoras na resolução de problemas. Sugere-se que o reforço da formação em gestão intercultural, através dos seus métodos, ferramentas e melhores práticas, aumentaria o desempenho das equipas multiculturais nas multinacionais tecnológicas.

Palavras-chave: Gestão intercultural; equipas multiculturais; gestão internacional de recursos humanos; multinacionais; negócios internacionais; empresas multinacionais de tecnologia.

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List of abbreviations

CHRM - Comparative human resource management

CCC – Cross-cultural competences

CCK – Cross-cultural knowledge

GVT – Global virtual team

FWA – Flexible work arrangement

HRM - Human resource management

IHRM - International human resource management

ICT - Information and communications technology

MCT – Multicultural team

MNE - Multinational enterprise

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprise

Introduction

The world is changing rapidly, more than ever, due to the non-precedent globalization and technology disruption era we are living. Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are economically dominant and they have forever changed the traditional business boundaries, increasing their penetrability. We can witness its reflection on many levels, whether we look at the high rates of economic change, to the fast increasing number and diversity of players, or the intensifying complexity and uncertainty (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007). MNEs in the global top 100 are accountable for more than 30% of business-funded R&D in the world, thus playing an extremely important role in the world economy. MNEs in the fields of Technology, Pharmacy, and Automotive are the ones with the major preponderance (UNCTAD, 2019). Multicultural teams (MCTs) clearly represent a growing reality for companies and they are an intrinsic part of MNEs. They can be described as “compositions of team members from several countries who must rely on group collaboration if each member is to experience the optimum of success and goal achievement” (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 28).

Factors such as migration, the easiness and reduced cost of traveling internationally, the social media, the increasing access to the internet worldwide, and *global interconnectedness* overall have certainly contributed to the increased cultural diversity in our societies (Aytug, Kern, & Dilchert, 2018), which must be recognized and understood, also within businesses.

The importance of the role played by MNEs is undisputed, as well as their need for appropriate intercultural management (IM) to prosper in a world that is increasingly more multicultural. Even though there is a vast literature about IM and tech MNEs, there is a lack of connection between both. This investigation aims at deepening that connection by focusing on IM at the level of multicultural teams in tech MNEs. The investigation question that has originated this study was “How are tech MNEs approaching intercultural management?”.

This study’s literature review – Chapter I - will focus, firstly, on defining the key concepts of IM and international human resource management (IHRM), aiming to understand their complementarity, importance, and the best practices in these forms of management which lead to MNEs’ success worldwide. The global challenges in these fields are also on the agenda. Secondly, the emphasis is on exploring the management and

organizational culture particularities of tech MNEs, apprehending what makes them intrinsically different from other types of companies.

To reply to the investigation question, there was the necessity to create a questionnaire composed of 12 questions and targeted at managers and members of tech MNEs, resorting to the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Chapter II approaches the methodology explanation.

The third chapter (Chapter III) focuses on the data collection analysis and discussion of the questionnaire's results and consequent findings.

Lastly, the final chapter (Chapter IV) is composed of the conclusions, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter I. Literature review

1. Intercultural management

The discipline of IM was born in the late 1970s from the recognition that different markets have very specific cultural characteristics and that, therefore, marketing rules need to be adapted to them (Rothlauf, 2014). Since then, the increasing globalization progression accelerated from the vast number of companies that started its process of internationalization. Their activities differ from the ones of local enterprises and their workforce is commonly composed of people coming from different cultural backgrounds (Tutara, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014). On one hand, companies have realized that if they want to establish themselves in foreign markets, they must adapt their people, products, and services to the linguistic and cultural requirements of different nations. On the other hand, these realizations have broadened the scope and object of study of the IM discipline which now includes “management at the level of organisations operating in a multi-cultural environment” (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 8). Having broadened its scope, IM found common ground with IHRM, which will be analyzed further ahead.

Regarding the difference between Management and IM, one must recognize that the variance lays in the extension of the general management definition by its cultural constituent. If Management can be characterized by its fundamental task of making people able of achieving “joint performance through common goals, common values” (Drucker, 2001, p. 8), IM will complement this ability through a blend of “knowledge, insights and skills (Burggraaf, 1998)” (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 9), which are essential for properly dealing with all the differences that arise from the interaction between diverse national and regional cultures and numerous “management levels within and between organisations” (Burggraaf, 1998)” (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 9). Several authors defend this strategy of comprehensive diversity management, which fundamentally aims at efficiently approaching and understanding the cultural differences in both organizations and teams (Böhm, 2013). This type of diversity and inclusion management refers to “voluntary organizational interventions designed to recognize and accommodate workers’ demographic and personal differences into formal and informal organizational structures through deliberate measures and policies, with the aim of maximizing the contribution of staff to organizational goals (Cooke & Saini, 2010)” (Donnelly, 2015, p. 199).

Cultural diversity is a source of great enrichment and represents an opportunity for companies, but when mismanaged it can act as a catalyst for conflict, becoming a liability. This is why many companies still look at interculturality as “an inhibiting of the efficient use of resources such as time, money and human energy” (Thorrold, 2016, p. 1878). In fact, Stahl and Tung (2015) analyzed 1141 articles published over 24 years and reasoned that literature has looked at interculturality mainly as a cost, enhancing the difficulties that it conveys to organizations over its benefits. Nonetheless, the same authors challenge this idea and claim these reflections of cross-cultural reality to be inaccurate, leveraging its benefits (Stahl & Tung, 2015). To deal with this potential conflict, IM resorts to specific tools and methods which mediate between two or more cultures (Rothlauf, 2014), that we will analyze thereafter. Organizations need to understand interculturality as a vital resource for collaboration and as a tool for innovation and ultimate “positive organizational and personal transformation” (Thorrold, 2016).

1.1. Intercultural management methods, tools, and best practices

To fully understand and practice IM, it is imperative to recognize *culture* as the *software of the mind*, realizing that the way individuals think, feel, act, and interact with the world is deeply connected to their culture and that people's *mental programs* vary as much as their social environment background and lifetime experiences (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Additionally, according to Onyusheva and Changjongpradit (2018), it is also important to recognize culture first as relative, second as both an individual and group factor, and third as inherited and, in some cases, learned or adapted. Culture is relative because it's not absolute: it is not necessarily wrong nor right as it settles over a "gray area full of beliefs, religion, and customs". It is essentially a group factor because it reflects group behavior, community, shared beliefs. It is inherited from and to generations, passed on, but it also adapts because it changes continuously, along with social environment changes (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018).

Hofstede's six dimensions of culture (Table 1), power distance (PDI), individualism versus collectivism (IND), masculinity versus femininity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAV), long-term versus short-term orientation (LTO), and indulgence versus restraint (IVR), are still a useful instrument for reaching comprehension about the culture of individuals according to their country of origin.

It is important, though, to understand that the world context has greatly changed since Hofstede's initial publication of the book "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind" in 1991 (a second edition was released in 2010, which included the 6th dimension). Thereafter it is expected that literature points out several limitations to it, that one must be aware of. Böhm (2013) argues that Hofstede's country categories don't always present adequate clustering, sometimes overlooking national boundaries or ethnic groups, and that they hardly acknowledge the global citizen.

In today's world, it is increasingly common that individuals move very easily, studying, living, and working in different places and countries throughout their lives. An individual that has been born in Portugal, lived for his first 15 years in Brazil and following 10 years in the USA, for example, would hardly fit Hofstede's dimensions as it seems inadequate to reduce him to his citizenship since it is obvious that the "increasing levels of multicultural experiences have implications in our personal, social, and occupational lives."

(Aytug, Kern, & Dilchert, 2018, p. 1). Thus, other authors' insights are highly useful to complement Hofstede's work.

Table 1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

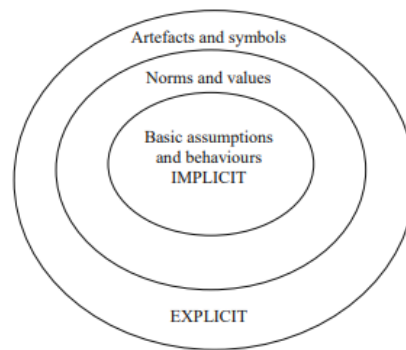
Cultural dimensions	Low	High	Descriptions
Power distance (PDI)	Power distance		The degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally
Individualism (IDV)	Collectivism	Individualism	The degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members
Masculinity (MAS)	Femininity	Masculinity	Preference in a society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success (masculinity). Preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life (femininity)
Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	Uncertainty avoidance		The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and the degree of aversion to risk they experience
Long term orientation (LTO)	Long term	Short term	It describes societies' time horizon. Long term-oriented societies attach more importance to the future. They foster pragmatic values oriented towards rewards, including persistence, saving and capacity for adaptation. In short term-oriented societies, values promoted are related to the past and the present, including steadiness, respect for tradition, preservation of one's face, reciprocity and fulfilling social obligations.
Indulgence (IVR)	Restraint	Indulgence	A society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun (indulgence). A society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (restraint)

Source: (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010)

Before analyzing these insights, it is pertinent to assert the importance of the individuals' culture besides their country one. To do so, there are simple, yet relevant, models

to which one can resort to, starting with the Onion Model of Culture (Figure 1). In this model, physical phenomena are considered as explicit and mental as implicit, meaning that culture must be perceived as layered. For an individual to be successful at an intercultural encounter, he must properly decipher these layers (Thorrold, 2016).

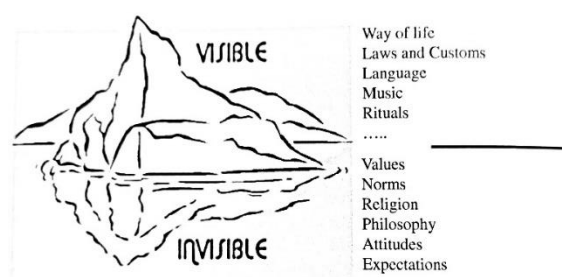
Figure 1. Hofstede’s Onion Model of Culture



Source: (Thorrold, 2016, p. 1879)

The 1976 Edward T. Hall’s Iceberg-Model (Figure 2) also contributes to enhancing the comprehension of culture and its complexity. It draws attention to the connection between visible elements of culture such as music, language, food or even the practice of queuing for a bus (the tip of the iceberg), and their drivers, the invisible elements of culture (the invisible part of the iceberg), which covers values, norms, religions, expectations, the difference between public and private, and far more aspects.

Figure 2. Hall’s 1976 Iceberg Model of Culture



Source: (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 26)

One should look at the above-mentioned models as indicative tools to keep in mind. They are useful instruments to remind us of the complexities and roots of culture. Nonetheless, their isolated interpretation is still not enough to ensure the aimed success at

an intercultural encounter, as these models may be over-simplistic or reducer (Thorrold, 2016). They compare national cultural differences to a general level. However, one must regard further aspects, such as: firstly, intercultural interactions don't necessarily involve all of the afore-mentioned levels of culture to the same extent; secondly, non-national cultural factors are interfering in interactions, as personality or personal history; thirdly, the culture within cultures is not homogenous, and heterogeneousness is being further heightened every day by the ever-increasing globalization; and fourthly, both culture and culture identity are highly dynamic (Thorrold, 2016). In short, individuals are now more unlikely to fit a static culture model as, on one hand, they are increasingly the result of a combination of cultures and, on the other hand, cultures themselves are evolving faster and changing more rapidly as a result of the high globalization level.

To complement the aforementioned tools, one can also resort to culture assimilators, which were born in the 1970s. They appear to be a solid tool for measuring cross-cultural knowledge (CCK) because they can cover several critical incidents (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017). Critical incidents consist of "short stories of cross-cultural situations and encounters". They're considered critical because, number one, they are expected to be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultures and, number two, they explain possible misinterpretations that might result in conflict. The critical incidents are generally followed by four possible answers that include "an interpretation of the situation, potential courses of action, or future events" (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 634), which should afterwards be adapted in order to construct a behavior framework (Fiedler & Mitchell, 1970). The answers are then assessed as follows: "'Wrong' answers then reflect ethnocentric considerations from other cultures or a stereotyped worldview. Several 'right' answers are proposed to avoid an isomorphic presentation of cultures and to place value on tolerance for ambiguity." (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 634).

To this point, it is also relevant to state that IM recognizes the deep cultural complexity which communication embodies. It sustains the idea that communication is not linear in the sense that there are no neutral messages, for they transmit not only words and ideas or concepts, but norms and values as well, which are not always recognized and understood by the receiving part (Rothlauf, 2014). This is an important disclosure for managers of intercultural teams, and we will approach it again further ahead in this study, in topic 1.4. *Global challenges and solutions.*

Bearing these acknowledgments, one can now return to Hofstede's six model framework critics and counterparts. Alfons Trompenaars is among the most relevant authors in intercultural studies and he's work brings an interesting addition to Hofstede's framework. This author focuses his dimensions not only on countries but he furthermore "describes organizational difference or diverse functional responsibilities within a company as influence factors in international business" (Böhm, 2013, p. 118) (Table 2).

Moving past both the countries' dimensions spectrum and the individual persona's culture, which should not be overlooked, current culture concepts must adapt to the culture in international management. To do so, it seems reasonable that the variances and similarities on the team and/or to organizational levels should assume higher relevance than the ones to a country level (Böhm, 2013). Fink et al. (2011) have created a "generic model on an organizational [culture] level" which "presents five traits of normative personalities based on five domains" (Böhm, 2013, p. 118), described in Table 3. It can also be considered a tool for effective IM.

Several authors defend that, ultimately, having the knowledge and comprehension prevents conflict and the cost of individuals, leading to better creativity, problem-solving, and flexibility (Böhm, 2013; Casanova & Miranda, 2015; Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018). Diversity measures should, therefore, increase acceptance towards diversity and the appreciation of new outlooks. People must be actively encouraged to identify differences such as values or behavioral norms to "enhance acceptance and respect towards other cultures in international business practices" (Böhm, 2013, p. 119). These behaviors reflect cross-cultural competences of individuals, intrinsic to IM, which include the "ability to draw on personal resources and traits to understand the specifics of intercultural interaction and to adjust one's behavior to these specifics" (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 633).

Table 2. Trompenaars' categories and dimensions of cultural diversity in business

Categories	Sub-dimensions	Description
Relationships with people	Universalism vs. Particularism	Universalism describes how work life is influenced by societal codes. Particularistic cultures put greater attention on relationships rather than strict appliance of societal codes
	Individualism vs.	This dimension equals Hofstede's individualism (IDV) index and measures the degree in which

	Communitarianism	people focus on their individual achievements or - in contrast - on the community
	Neutral vs. Emotional	This dimension describes if emotions in business are expressed, tolerated or even encouraged (emotional) or if objectiveness and few emotions in a work context are preferred (neutral)
	Specific vs. Diffuse	This dimension measures how important personal contact and relationships are in business settings. Diffuse cultures tend to build upon a personal, informal level before dealing with business facts
	Achievement vs. Ascription	Achievement describes the focus on past achievements within a society. In contrast, ascription measures a person's status by attributes like gender, age, or educational background
Attitudes towards time		This category describes if people focus on achievements in the past or on planned development in the future. This category is not equivalent with Hofstede's dimension 'long-term orientation' (LTO) as it primarily measures if planning is done in a short-term or a long-term
Attitudes towards environment		This category describes the relation between people and their environment. It examines individuals' tendencies to gain motivation within themselves or by outer incentives

Note: summarized from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2010, pp. 8-10
Source: (Böhm, 2013, p. 118)

Table 3. Traits of the normative personality of an organization

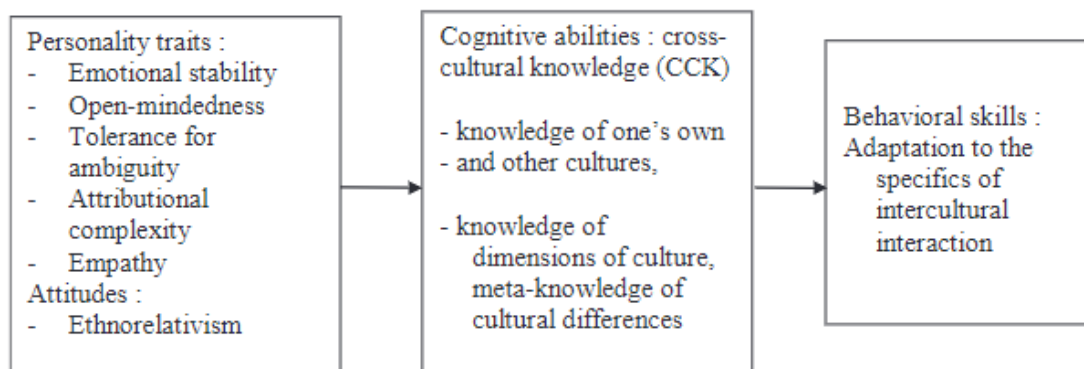
Domain	Trait
Organizational culture	Dependency on others versus autonomy
Strategy	Opportunity and change seeking versus reliance on organizational resources
Structure	Strong hierarchy versus loose hierarchy
Operations	Rule obedience versus pragmatism
Relationship to external environment	Extroversion versus introversion

Source: Fink et al. 2011, p. 13
(Böhm, 2013, p. 118)

From a broader perspective, one can argue that the base for effectively applying IM starts at both knowledge and awareness. At any given moment, to properly implement IM at an internal level, both managers and members of multicultural teams (MCTs) must be conscient, understand the need for cross-cultural communication, and be open-minded and whiling to listen. Externally, the organization must be prepared to deal properly with different cultures, being aware not only of consumers' needs but also of the “cultural aspects, the way of life” from both their clients and workers (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018). Ultimately, knowledge is key, and, ideally, it should be transversal to every aspect, layer, and hierarchy of the organization. Knowledge leads to understanding and harmony, which are vital to effective multicultural teamwork, the focus of this investigation.

When it comes to individuals, throughout the years, literature has strongly linked cross-cultural competences (CCC) in individuals to personality traits and attitudes, focusing primarily in “open-mindedness (or openness), absence of ethnocentrism, sociability (or extraversion), emotional stability, self-confidence, empathy, attributional complexity, and tolerance for ambiguity.”¹ (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 633) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Components of cross-cultural competence



Source: (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 634)

¹ Among these, the considered big five personality traits are the following: “openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 634)

A 2019 study aimed at linking emotional intelligence (EI) to intercultural effectiveness and it concluded that, in terms of personality, *openness*² has a very positive effect on it [intercultural effectiveness], whereas extroversion, surprisingly, may have a negative one. It might be harder for extroverts to cope with “reduced communication possibilities and increased loneliness, naturally occurring in unfamiliar environments” (Dimitrijević, Starčević, & Marjanović, 2019, p. 107). To solve challenges led by intercultural communication problems, “a reflexive and observant approach—characteristic of introverts—may yield a more effective solution.” (Dimitrijević, Starčević, & Marjanović, 2019, p. 107). Still according to this study, higher openness increases the probability that one will look at a situation from different perspectives (culturally speaking), which raises the likelihoods “of arriving at accurate assessments and effective resolutions for intercultural communication problem” (Dimitrijević, Starčević, & Marjanović, 2019, p. 108).

Another study, relating the internationalization of MNEs to the top-management team, interestingly shows that these member’s “higher cognitive tolerance for foreignness”, increases the teams’ levels of both international attention and trust, consequently “facilitating strategic decisions that favor firm-level internationalization” (Pisani, Muller, & Bogățan, 2018, p. 239). This feature seems to be correlated to the global mindset of managers of highly internationalized firms and also to their cultural intelligence, i.e. “a multifaceted culture-general form of intelligence that is related to effective intercultural interactions (Thomas et al., 2015)” (Pisani, Muller, & Bogățan, 2018, p. 241), or the “capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 633). According to Presbitero (2020), cultural intelligence has also been related to a higher ability to “interact with foreign language anxiety, and in the process, reduce the negative effects of foreign language anxiety on individual task performance” (Presbitero, 2020, p. 10) in global virtual teams (GVTs).

Dimitrijević, Starčević and Marjanović (2019), argue that EI plays an important role in (potentially) improving the capability of properly mediating intercultural situations, which is a necessary resource in the MNEs’ context of cultural diversity, as aforementioned.

² “In the context of CCC, open-mindedness refers to avoid considering a culturally determined behavior as “abnormal” on the simple ground that it differs from one's home cultural norms” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 635)

Even though research, such as the one just previously analyzed, tends to associate personality to CCC, there are also queries emerging from this continuous association. Another recent study questions the real link between CCC and cross-cultural knowledge (CCK) by building a structured model that shows that “most of the personality traits³ generally presented as predictive of CCC, do not significantly determine cross-cultural knowledge” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 632). The authors studied the extent to which personality traits impact CCK in international business and concluded that “personality at large has a very little direct effect on specific knowledge and cognitive abilities, which helps people adapt to the difficulties in intercultural interactions” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017, p. 639). The study enhances the need for further quantitative research in the area to consolidate conceptualizations of CCC. However, its results highlight, on one hand, the personality traits that more strongly correlate CCC to CCK (and that, therefore, are more interesting for the scope of this research): (1) *motivation to understand human behavior*, (2) *simple versus complex explanations*, (3) *open-mindedness*. On the other hand, the results also highlight the ones that are less strongly correlated. These correlations’ explanations are resumed in Table 4, according to the authors’ clarifications.

In practical terms for management and IHRM, Bartel-Radic, and Giannelloni (2017) suggest that no individual can be equally strong in every trait considered by CCP, hence recruiters should wisely reflect on which traits are more important for which function when recruiting, assessing the adequate tools for it and not focusing only on measurement of personality traits, which appears not to be so useful.

Examples of other practical policies of IM would be “commitments to diversity and equal opportunities underpinned by initiatives such as employee affinity network groups, leadership and mentoring programs, and flexible working opportunities.” (Donnelly, 2015, p. 207)

³ The nine personality traits considered for the model were “Complex vs. simple explanations”, “Metacognition”, “Motivation to understand human behavior”, “Emotional stability”, “Ethnocentrism”, “Open-mindedness”, “Self-confidence”, “Communication skills (sociability)” and “Empathy” (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017).

Table 4. Highlights of personality traits that more strongly correlate CCC to CCK according to Bartel-Radic and Giannelloni (2017)

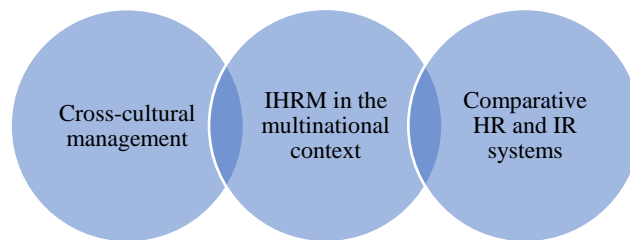
Correlation	Personality Trait	Interpretation / possible explanation
Highly positive	(1) Motivation to understand human behavior	“It is possible that individuals with higher motivation to understand human behavior benefit more from their cross-cultural experience and consequently develop a better understanding of other cultures. Motivation is essential for learning, perhaps especially in the intercultural domain.”
Highly positive	(2) Simple versus complex explanations	“People who tend to feel at ease with complex explanations about other's behavior also tend to show a higher competence when it comes to managing intercultural interactions. It may be derived from this that in intercultural environments, those who possess the capability to collect complex information and categorize it in a more efficient way tend to better handle complex managerial situations in teams involving people from different cultures.”
Medium positive	(3) Open-mindedness	N/A
Negative	Metacognition	“This construct is linked to the tendency to think about the underlying processes involved in causal attributions (Fletcher et al., 1986). In the domain of cross-cultural interaction, we can think of this as similar to constantly trying to analyze environmental cues (e.g. the nonverbal behavior of foreigners) and assign meaning to them and then attempting to develop appropriate answers. Although intuitively appealing, and frequently quoted in the literature, this does not seem to influence CCK”
Negative	Communication skills	“This does not mean that the poorer a person's communication skills, the more he/she knows about varied cultural settings. It rather shows that the more confident respondents are in their ability to understand quickly and easily, the less they question cultural differences in communication styles. / Individuals who have high confidence in their communication skills do not easily develop an adequate interpretation of foreign cultures.”

Source: own creation based on Bartel-Radic and Giannelloni (2017)

1.2. International human resource management

There is an intrinsic complementarity between IM and IHRM. To fully comprehend it, it is required to understand what IHRM is. Literature shows consensus among authors about the three main headings in the field of IHRM: (1) Cross-cultural management, (2) Comparative human resource management, and (3) International human resource management. Table 5 resumes three different author's views on each one of the three topics and Figure 4 illustrates the inter-relationships between approaches to the field according to Dowling (2007).

Figure 4. Inter-relationships between approaches to the field



Source: (Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr., 2007, p. 2)

Table 5. Considerations on the main three heading of IHRM according to several authors

Authors	Cross-cultural management	Comparative HR management	International HR management
Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr. (2007)	Examination of human behavior within organizations from an international perspective	Developed from the comparative industrial relations and HRM literature Aims to describe, compare and analyze HRM systems in various countries	Explores the implications that the process of internationalization has for the activities and policies of HRM
Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon (2007)	Different nationalities have different values which affect the way people organize, conduct and manage work Crucial to have awareness of cultural differences as international HR manager Deep caution when deciding (or not) to adopt standardized HR policies and practices throughout the world	Explores the extent to which HRM differs between different countries – or occasionally between different areas within a country or different region of the world Recognition that employment systems differ noticeably between countries and managing human resources must vary from country to country	Explores how MNEs attain having an international coherence in and cost-effective approach to the way IHRM manages its people in all the countries it covers Ensures responsiveness to the differences in assumptions and in what works from one location to another
Harzing & Pinnington (2011)	Recognition of the importance of Hofstede's work and influence on IHRM	Recognition of the importance of the neo-institutional theory (e.g. DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) Concentration on similarities and differences between countries in policies and practices adopted by a wide range of stakeholders (government, political and public sector institutions, professional groups, etc.)	Recognition of the importance of Bartlett and Ghoshal's work Recognition of the need of understanding and managing cultural differences between organizations, successfully implementing the appropriate strategy and managing the process through its various stages

Source: self-creation.

1.2.1. Cross-cultural management

Every nation and culture are absolutely unique, and that uniqueness is composed of rich cultural differences in values and attitudes which differ between nations and individuals. Cross-cultural management recognizes it and, in a nutshell, aims to examine human behavior within the working context from an international perspective (Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr., 2007). One can find vast literature and research evidence demonstrating how different nationalities are associated with different values which, in turn, clearly influence people's organization, conduct, and management of work (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007, p. 6).

However, as previously mentioned, there is also a tendency in the literature to outline the possible issues that arise from cultural diversity. The ability of an organization to tackle the possible issues of cultural diversity and obtain the known gains of an effective multicultural team will "ultimately depend on the team's ability to manage the process in an effective manner, as well as on the context within which the team operates." (Stahl & Tung, 2015, p. 398). The same authors claim that "the effects of cultural differences on outcomes are mixed", meaning positive or negative, depending on variables that are related to management, namely how cultural differences are managed (Stahl & Tung, 2015, p. 398). Furthermore, the study illustrates the growing evidence shown by research on how cultural diversity acts contradictory – depending on its management - in different fields of international business, among which MNEs' performance and multicultural teams.

Needing cross-cultural knowledge as a premise, one must advocate on how managers in general must be utterly aware of cultural differences, considering their weight when deciding upon HR policies around the world and being mindful that these activities, such as many others, may suffer a great influence from the cultural values and practices of their host countries (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007).

1.2.2. Comparative human resource management

As the name suggests, this matter has developed from the comparative industrial relations and HRM literature, seeking to make the description, establish the comparison and undertake the analysis of HRM between diverse countries (Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr., 2007, p. 1). CHRM shares interests with IHRM. Even though both streams have evolved parallelly, they share an interest “in how time, process and context affect HRM activities in different parts of the world” (Brewster, Mayrhofer, & Smale, 2016, p. 4).

CHRM schools of thought focus on both the similitudes and variances of policies and practices undertaken in different countries by various stakeholders, such as the government or non-profit organizations, and are also sensible to matters such as geographical and historical differences (Harzing & Pinnington, 2011). The aforementioned authors enhance the importance of the neo-institutional theory, which assumes that “institutions and their structures, systems, policies and practices are subject to a range of general forces”⁴ (Harzing & Pinnington, 2011, p. 3). It is also within the spectrum of CHRM to understand “the role of regulation” concerning the aspects among its scope and “how this varies across, within and between countries.” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2957).

Coming from an extremely cultural diverse world with bigger and smaller countries, regional differences, language groups, distinct economies, markets, education systems and so many other variable cultural aspects, it is not surprising to acknowledge that the employment systems around the world differ, and so must HR (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007, p. 6). However, though one tends to immediately associate different HRM practices to different countries, that is not always the best interest for the MNEs. It is relevant to notice that MNEs may prefer to standardize at least certain practices of their IHRM practices as it might be more cost-efficient and “it allows for the smoother transfer of best practices around the organisation, it makes transfers of people easier and it is fairer” (Brewster, Mayrhofer, & Smale, 2016, p. 286).

Studies within the scope of CHRM are valuable for MNEs through providing information for better understanding of which practices may or may not work in the different

⁴ “These forces may push Institutions to follow a particular direction (coercive), elect to copy others (mimic) or feel the pressure to do what is socially acceptable as the normal way of doing things (normative).” (Harzing & Pinnington, 2011, p. 3).

countries where an organization operates, thus helping management to take decisions. As an example, one may consider a recent study made across 21 countries and 4790 organizations about flexible work arrangements (FWA)⁵, which have been increasingly used by employers worldwide as (an intended) benefit for both workers and organizations. Interestingly, the study concluded that even though the use of FWAs had the “overall effect of reducing absenteeism and turnover”, this effect was weakened significantly when the FWAs “were not consistent with national cultural practices” (Peretz, Fried, & Levi, 2018, p. 198). Moreover, the results suggested that “national cultural practices have differential effects on employee use of different FWAs”⁶ (Peretz, Fried, & Levi, 2018, p. 198) and that, therefore, employees may react differently to it and organizations should take into account the national culture of the country before offering FWAs to them.

As a final note, it is also relevant to mention that MNEs’ distinctive features such as size, scale, scope or reach, empower them with the capacity to implement expertise that has been developed in one country into their operations in a different one (Harzing & Pinnington, 2011).

⁵ “Most commonly, these FWAs have included flextime, [...] job sharing [...], compressed workweek [...], and teleworking”. (Peretz, Fried, & Levi, 2018, p. 183)

⁶ “(e.g., telework is strongly related to power distance, flextime is more strongly related to gender egalitarianism, and job sharing, and compressed workweek are more strongly related to humane orientation).” (Peretz, Fried, & Levi, 2018, p. 198)

1.2.3. International human resource management

Before defining IHRM, it is important to briefly outline the general field of HRM, which refers to the activities that an organization carries out in order to use its human resources as efficiently as possible (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2007, p. 2).

Regarding IHRM itself, it examines the way that “international organisations manage their human resources across these different national contexts” (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007, p. 6), making people management more complex in comparison to its national setting due to a new variety of practices, policies and strategy matters. IHRM explores how MNEs manage to maintain international consistency and a profitable approach in the way they manage their workers in every country where they’re based (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007). Almost a decade ago, Harzing and Punnington mentioned the pertinent work of the authors Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), who defended that MNEs were evolving towards a new form of management and organizational form – *transnational firm* - with global networks of managers, global projects and international mobility, and stated, as well, that competitiveness in global markets is argued to be based on managers possessing a global mindset (Harzing & Punnington, 2011, p. 3). The importance of managers possessing a global mindset has been previously referred to on this paper on the *IM tools, methods and best practices* section (Pisani, Muller, & Bogăţan, 2018). The proliferation of international companies is now a reality more than it has ever been in contemporary history, and, attending to today’s vast “mobility of capital, people and technology”, it is unavoidable that “the world of work happens in different simultaneous locations and under different sets of conditions.” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2971).

Having a clearer understanding of the concept of IHRM, one can recognize that operating in a vast range of countries and employing varied nationalities certainly makes HR activity much more complex (Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr., 2007) and under different sets of rules (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017). Regarding IHRM regulation, it “sits at the centre of competing demands between economic concerns (e.g. competitiveness and productivity) and social concerns (e.g. worker rights; equality and social justice)” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2958). Trade unions have played a major role in this field throughout the 20th century, but, as their power faints in the new century, questions arise, among other topics, about “how individuals are managed in ways that allow obtaining

outcomes that benefit and are fair to the main actors involved⁷” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2958).

⁷ “e.g. workers, employers unions, the business community, government ministries, international agencies, society) within and across national borders” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2958).

1.3. Understanding the importance of intercultural management and international human resource management

Over the past decades, work and employment have suffered changes which resulted in calls and challenges within organizations for more “sustainable management, procedural control, institutional governance, and political accountability” (Rodriguez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017, p. 2957). IM and IHRM are crucial to the endurance, performance and success of enterprises, whether we are discussing about MNEs or SMEs, and over a decade ago, research was already showing that there was an increasing need for HR specialists to conduct their activities with an international orientation, recognizing that the largest cost of operations in the majority of organizations is the people, and that, therefore, it is vital for organizations to be able to take full advantage of their capabilities and all the accumulated knowledge (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007).

Beyond this recognition, literature shows that MNEs’ success also derives from their ability to plan ahead, a strong and multicultural structure and, pressingly more, from their capacity of apprehending the soft skills required to survive in a global market, among which we can stress social competence and exceptional communication skills, now more than ever (Rothlauf, 2014).

It of great need that international managers decide, choose and adjust “strategies aligned with each country’s culture” (Diwakar, 2014, p. 43). Enhancing this idea, strongly grounded in IM, a study suggests that several authors argue that IM can improve all of the following areas in an organization: “a) workplace productivity; b) competitive advantage by enhancing operational effectiveness; costs savings, and promoting social justice and equity, c) resource acquisition by gaining both improving retention of high quality staff and broader access to clients, beneficiaries, investors and other stakeholders, d) marketing by excelling in performance and industry reputation, e) creativity, by enhancing innovation f) problem-solving; and, e) organizational flexibility.” (Besler & Sezerelb, 2012, p. 625). Under the same reasoning, further research displays that “heterogeneous teams are more likely to develop creative ideas compared to homogenous teams” and that “different perspectives and knowledge enrich the effectiveness and creativity of teams” (Böhm, 2013, p. 116), meaning that diversity acts as a motor of innovative ideas and solutions. An interesting way of visualizing this dynamic process of positive interculturality and its incoming value from a complementarity point of view would be through the Chinese concept of the *YinYang*.

Thorrold (2016) exemplifies it through an international project that at different stages might require different cultural profiles: such as “individual creativity at the concept stage, but more self-sacrificing teamwork during the implementation” (Thorrold, 2016, p. 1881). Creativity being one example among immense possible ones, such as cooperation, which is highly encouraged in some societies and discouraged in others (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018).

Diverse teams have less of a tendency for groupthink or group ethical decision-making and if, on one hand, diversity should prompt innovation, on the other hand, the excess of group cohesion “may become a source of rigidity that hinders the accomplishment of complex organizational tasks and adaptation to change” (Stahl & Tung, 2015, p. 407). Consequently, one can easily understand the pressing need for an adequate type of management for interculturality to be leveraged into a competitive advantage (Thorrold, 2016).

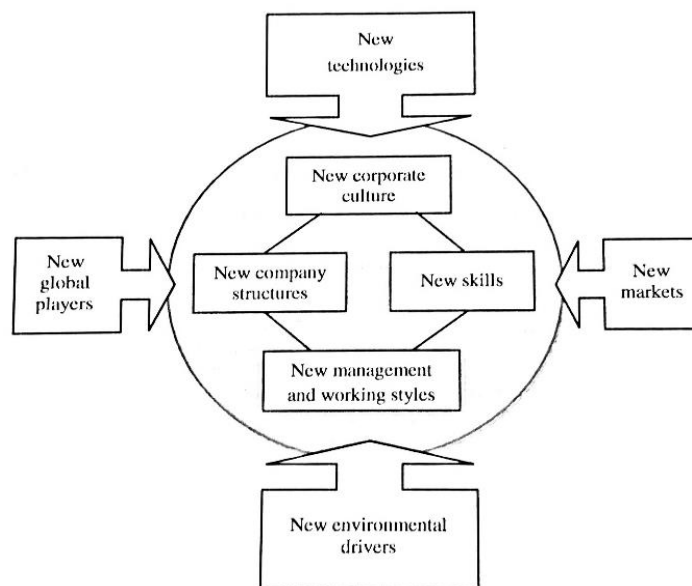
This is the moment where IM and IHRM walk hand in hand, intrinsically complementing each other. Proper IHRM must take into consideration the premises of IM if it is to be effective, bearing in thought that managing people across countries can’t be disconnected from their cultural understanding. In a nutshell, one might argue that the intercultural “theoretical articulation between management, leadership skills, and communication” are the indispensable tools for successful international negotiations and leaders or managers (Casanova & Miranda, 2015).

1.4. Global challenges and solutions

There are now enough examples of “business failures or stagnation of joint ventures due to management's inability to recognize cross-cultural challenges and tackle them appropriately” (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018, p. 55), contrasting to successful cases of companies tackling cross-cultural challenges effectively, which explain the growing importance of this field of research. The greater necessity for IM becomes indispensable under pressure aspects of globalization.

Rothlauf (2014) identifies 4 main global challenges for IM (Figure 5): new global players, new technologies, new markets, and new environmental drivers (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 4), and literature corroborates and complements these challenges with some other relevant topics not only for IM but for IHRM as well.

Figure 5. Challenges and solutions in the global context



Source: (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 4)

The rise of emerging countries (new players) in the world economy has become a particular strong reality for the past decade and it is now predictable that their relevance as global players will only increase in the future (Rothlauf, 2014; Onyusheva &

Changjongpradit, 2018). One of the most significant examples of this altering landscape of international business, if not the most, is China, which has overtaken the United States as the world's largest goods exporter in the space of the last decade, going from the world's 7th largest exporter in 2000 (3,9% of the world's exports) to the largest one in 2016 (13,2% of the world's exports) (Africano, et al., 2018, p. 17). The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), alongside with Eastern Europe (CEE), have large and fast-growing economies. They receive great amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI) and they are tearing apart the connection of emerging economies to low-value aspects of MNE's activities while progressing in the global value chain (Hugh, G., & Gunnigle, 2007; Africano, et al., 2018). For IHRM, from the MNEs' perspective, this represents great challenges such as coping with the immense cultural and institutional distance from the MNEs' home country, to dealing with the recruitment, withholding or transference of skilled managerial talent to these environments (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007). It is increasingly compulsory and relevant to have strong IM skills to successfully perform all these tasks.

An additional hassle is that there is still limited knowledge of the real impact of western HR practices in these countries and a lot of research to be done regarding the real economic footprint left by MNEs, which might turn out to be a key issue for IHRM professionals "given the potential implications of negative publicity for the multinational company" (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007, p. 311).

Regarding the role of new technologies, we are now starting the revolution of Industry 4.0., by means of being currently in the presence of global and cheap technologies as the internet, which allows easy massified access to information from anywhere in the world, and global control over markets. Additionally, new types of sophisticated technology are emerging, from educational technology to robotics or artificial intelligence (AI) (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 4). The real effects that AI, meaning "robots, intelligent devices, and applications of statistical learning theory" (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017, p. 112), will have on the "nature of work" and on the "availability of employment opportunities" are still not known, since they are still in their early stages, or at least not massified. Nonetheless, "their development portends potentially radical changes in the status quo" (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017, p. 112).

As for new markets, whether it is for proactive or reactive motives, companies are continuously pushed into them. MNEs' international strategy must take into consideration vital aspects for its success, such as a deep knowledge of the dynamics of the new markets, consumer behaviors or the competitive scene and landscape of the explicit markets (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 5). Likewise, there is an increasing need for diversity and intercultural communication training programs to all the individuals of multinational organizations, to develop the "knowledge and abilities to communicate with people from different cultures backgrounds and be able to monitor and adjust own behavior to deal effectively with those individuals" (Leca & Vranceanu, 2014, p. 364).

We are also in the presence of new environmental drivers: climate changing is the major 21st-century challenge not just for companies or the economy, but for humankind. The world seems to (finally) be putting the effort to fight it, as seen through the rising international agreements and summits, from the Paris Agreement (2015) to the European Green Deal (2019), which complies to no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. For companies in general, not only MNEs, survival and prosperity will stem from the ability to perform their activities in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way, by reinventing themselves, their products and services (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 5).

The 4 main challenges described by Rothlauf meet 4 solutions suggested by the same author (Figure 5): new company structures, new management and working styles, new skills, and new corporate culture (Rothlauf, 2014, pp. 6, 7).

For new company structures, the author defends that the "market-driven increased flexibility" should also be applied at the operational level of organizations, which must aim at adapting to meet the future's needs (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 6). It is extremely important for organizations to be able to adapt to the 4th industrial revolution, Industry 4.0, which is "realized by the combination of numerous physical and digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, adaptive robotics, augmented reality, additive manufacturing and Internet of Things (IoT)" (Ustundag & Cevikcan, 2018, p. 5), and aims at better-improving resources' effectiveness and productivity with the final goal of increasing the competitive power of companies. It contrasts from the previous revolutions as it "not only provides the change in main business processes but also reveals the concepts of smart and

connected products by presenting service-driven business models” (Ustundag & Cevikcan, 2018, p. 5), and older and more traditional companies may have a harder time adapting to it. This revolution shortens virtual distance, and so incites the existence of global virtual teams, which we will address over the next solution.

New management and working styles are deeply connected to the need of global managers embracing the challenge of thinking global in every possible sense, recognizing that every player in every corner of the international business – from suppliers to workers, to customers – has its one complex set of beliefs, values, and attitudes, which are one of a kind (Rothlauf, 2014).

Today’s workers are leaner and more agile than the ones of two decades ago, “they are continually reorganising and adapting, and they are less hierarchical in structure and decision authority” (Harris, 2016, p. 14), and both managers and companies must adapt to it. Some of the top risks or challenges for managers in the upcoming years will be “how to manage virtual teams; how to manage multigenerational groups (particularly with regard to differences in technology use), and how to support rapid knowledge flows across business units” (Gratton, 2016, p. 9), and to face all of these, there is the need of skills for dealing with diversity.

New skills relate to the need of business structures completely adapt to the given multicultural contexts, which can only happen through self-initiative and flexible workers who can implement and adapt to diverse cultures.

Finally, new corporate culture originates from the need of the MNEs applying international principles which are “binding and interculturally accepted” (Rothlauf, 2014, p. 7). There should be a global mindset of a culture of adaptation, multiculturality, and continuous innovation, as it has been continuously suggested throughout this paper.

Besides these 4 main identified challenges, there are other relevant topics regarding what’s ahead of IM and IHRM.

Within multicultural teams, there will always be a relevant challenge – language – which has often been overlooked by literature. Individuals of different groups (social, ethnical, etc.) speaking and listening to different languages, and the individuals’ assimilation

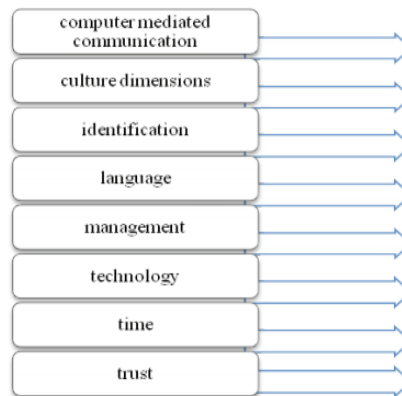
and interpretation on what they hear differently and “the ability to communicate effectively” represent truly global challenges (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018, p. 2). In fact, different language speakers communicating in the same language often wrongly believe that they are “sharing the same context and the same interpretation; that the same words and expressions have the same connotations” (Henderson, 2014, p. 75), which is not true and might ultimately lead to misunderstanding and conflict, as one tends to listen according to his own pattern of expectations (Henderson, 2014). If, on one hand, “Successful communication largely depends on the shared culture” (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018, p. 57), on the other, it is a very common issue that within communication between different cultures, one of them (an individual or a group), act as dominant, trying “to enforce their culture as the superior one.” (Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018, p. 57). When in a business context, this attitude will most probably damage the harmony of the workflow, leading to a higher risk which may negatively reflect on the profit level.

Different languages are an even bigger barrier when it comes to global virtual teams (GVTs), i.e., teams which operate virtually. Presbitero (2020) observed the role of foreign language skills in these teams’ context and concluded, through empirical support, that the skill of knowing a foreign language has a positive and significant association with the individual task performance of the GVT’s members. The author argues that, on one hand, a “higher level of foreign language skill leads to a lower level of foreign language anxiety” and that, on the other hand, a “higher level of foreign language anxiety is associated with a lower level of individual task performance in GVTs” (Presbitero, 2020, p. 10). GVTs, which are an increasing reality, face added challenges (Figures 6 and 7) and, among them, intercultural ones. A study of 2016, which includes interviews of over 50 IT specialists, mainly Polish, points out differences in time zone and language barriers as the main challenges, referring to technical problems and cultural differences as “additional issues”, whose “importance seems to be inessential” (Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016, p. 81). This study also stresses the positive opportunities which participants see in global virtual work, such as “the opportunity to contact the best world experts and fit the international clients’ needs much better” (Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016, p. 82).

The proper management of multicultural teams can lead to the emergence of original and ground-breaking ideas (Böhm, 2013), since “different thinking styles create healthy debate” (Hajro, Gibson, & Pudelko, 2015, p. 8), leading to a deeper discussion of

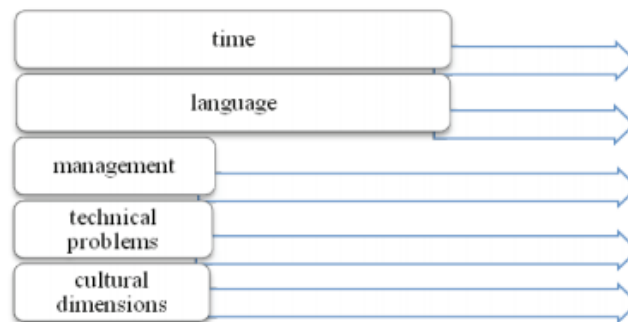
different perspectives. Technical communication might be easily reached through speaking a common language, but the same thing can't be argued about the socialization process, hence the need of culturally diverse workers to spend time getting to know each other, building up trustworthy relations (Henderson, 2014).

Figure 6. Global virtual team challenges



Source: (Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016, p. 75)

Figure 7. Global virtual team challenges in IT specialists' perception



Source: (Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016, p. 81)

Multicultural teams must develop strategies that promote “productive communication among all the members.” (Henderson, 2014, p. 77) to obtain the maximum gain of the various perspectives of its team members, since, in international teams, different languages are “increasingly recognized as a valuable resource” (Henderson, 2014, p. 80).

Inclusion is a highly desirable goal for both *business success* and *competitiveness* because it removes unwanted obstacles perceived as unfair, providing individuals with the chance of

being themselves and reach their full potential (Leca & Vranceanu, 2014). Inclusive groups “encourage and bring disagreements to light, because they realize it leads to effective solutions and are more flexible and adaptable to situations” (Leca & Vranceanu, 2014, p. 364), which is ultimately beneficial to all stakeholders involved: from individuals to organizations and groups and, finally, to society in general.

Moving outside the international and multicultural teams’ spectrum, another global challenge is the increasing world terrorism, one of the current issues that have a great effect on IHRM policies and international workers’ lives. These events have an enormous impact on expatriate employees because they hamper the recruitment of future expatriate employees for the affected countries and force HR professionals to be fully aware of associated risks (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007, p. 311). MNEs from emergent markets are better prepared to operate before uncertain institutional environments than the ones from developed ones. They are also less disturbed by external threatening events, but, nonetheless, these events also encourage them to find and seize opportunities in more stable countries, to run from this uncertainty; meaning that there is a “benefit to internationalising in the face of terrorism” (Dau, Moore, & Abrahms, 2018, p. 91). Furthermore, businesses represent one of the main targets of terrorism, which is currently becoming a bigger threat, and there is an increasing pressure to “understand how to bolster counterterrorism efforts and augment resilience” (Dau, Moore, & Abrahms, 2018, p. 91).

Changing careers has also become a challenge, as individuals have an increasingly different attitude towards it. Nowadays, people are progressively emphasizing their career mobility in face of their commitment to companies or organizations, looking at the international experience as a way of enriching themselves as professionals and individuals, knowing that in due course they can apply the gained skills in multiple organizations. This trend is followed by the one of “self-initiated foreign work experience (SFE)” (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007, p. 313), meaning that people no longer wait for international opportunities to occur within their organizations, they search for them actively, by themselves. This trend presents itself as an opportunity for MNEs to recruit skilled labor for its subsidiaries to a lesser cost than expatriates. However, there are issues concerning both SFEs’ re-entry in home markets and employing organizations that require further investigation (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007, p. 313).

Over the years, global staffing was, and it continues to be, very important to the “MNE’s effectiveness and performance” (Collings & Isichei, 2018, p. 181). According to Hugh et al. (2007), the patterns of global staffing are also changing in the face of 4 key trends. Firstly, due to dual-career issues, since the potential international assignee no longer fits the family man who provides for his family and whose wife will willingly follow to a new country. Secondly, on the women’s role in international assignments participation, which is still often disregarded and/or overlooked. Thirdly, on the numerous issues and concerns around repatriation. Fourthly, on the lack of proper talent management at an international level (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007).

Even though the current international climate might be under a mist of uncertainty, the evermore global world demands evermore global thinking MNEs, powered by an international mindset and staff. Workers must be encouraged to experience *international* to attain deeper knowledge and understanding of cultures and markets, securing skills that will allow them to excel in IM. The greater need for international assignees derives not only from the expansion of emergent economies, but also from the exponential growth of SMEs alongside the increasing number of international joint ventures (Hugh & Gunnigle, 2007).

Furthermore, though there is the prediction of decline of organizational careers and corporate expatriation, “it is clear that global staffing arrangements continue to draw significantly on traditional expatriate assignments, short-term assignments, IBT, commuter and rotational assignments” (Collings & Isichei, 2018, p. 181), and there seems to be little research for alternative forms of global mobility. Currently, MNEs are prioritizing the development and obtention of capabilities from their global talent pool “rather than sending expatriates for specific tasks (Sparrow, Scullion, & Tarique, 2014)” (Guo, Rammal, & Dowling, 2016, p. 25). IHRM policies must be rethanked and adapted: there is the need of searching for alternatives.

2. Management and organizational culture particularities of tech multinational enterprises

Technology companies are playing a prodigious role in today's modern economy, flourishing it, being in the core center of innovation. Though there is a considerable amount of literature about tech companies there isn't an exact consensus among authors on the specific criteria that defines them and differentiates them from other companies (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005). There is also a lack of research about the "characteristics of the organizational culture and strategy that influence the performance and the growth of the IT companies" (Panchelieva, 2017, p. 50). IT is a relatively recent field and IT firms present features such as "table economic indicators, high levels of employment, good salary levels and working conditions when compared to other industries." (Panchelieva, 2017, p. 50).

An explanatory study that analyzed 200 different papers has come to some definitions of technological firm, considering 4 main aspects. It should be a firm (1) employing mostly engineers, scientists and academics, (2) that invests part of its revenue in R&D activities, (3) which develops complex products and, finally, (4) it must grow at a fast pace and have a global market (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005, p. 125). Besides these 4 main topics, Table 6 contains 19 further characteristics that authors associate to tech companies, which corroborate the 4 above-mentioned aspects, such as the intimate connection of the firms' activity to R&D, the type of management attitude towards risk and change, or the flat organizational structure. It is also important to stress that there is a tendency to associate high or low-tech companies to their industry of business, however, that is not necessarily accurate, as they vary. Therefore, when defining tech companies, the emphasis of analysis should be the firm itself in opposition to its area of business (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005).

At this point becomes important to understand the particularities of the organizational culture of tech companies since they are, to a certain extension, directly linked to the company's IHRM policies and the way multiculturalism is managed in international teams, which is the prime focus of this research.

Even though every company surely has its own, self, and unique organizational culture, there seem to be transversal aspects to tech companies' organizational culture such as highly "decentralized decision-making processes" or a "flat organizational structure" (Table 6). Table 6 will be taken into consideration further ahead in this study when connecting IM practices to tech MNEs.

Table 6. The characteristics authors associate with technology firms

Example source	Characteristics	Brief description
Bowonder and Yadav (1999)	Relative R&D investment level	A firm's basic commitment to technological activity through its R&D expenses
Shanklin and Ryans (1987)	Relative number of R&D personnel	A firm's emphasis on employing R&D personnel
Howells (1999)	Outsourcing R&D	A firm's emphasis on conducting R&D in-house rather than outsourcing it
Ansoff and Stewart (1967)	Emphasis on applied research vs. development	A firm's R&D focus is on applied research rather than on development activities
Shanklin and Ryans (1987)	Management commitment to R&D	Top management commitment to, and involvement in R&D activity
Dvir and Shenhar (1990)	Focus on innovative R&D	Innovativeness as an objective of the R&D activity
Deeds et al. (2000)	Number of new products and their innovativeness	A firm's emphasis on continually introducing to the market new and innovative products
Goldman (1982)	Products with a short life cycle	A firm's products are characterized by a short life cycle
Shanklin and Higgins (1992)	Technology-driven customers	A firm faces customers which actively search for, and easily adopt technology-based innovative products
Shanklin and Ryans (1987)	Ill-defined market needs	A firm's market needs are not well-defined, are specified in general terms, or are not stable
Von-Gilnow and Mohrman (1990)	Management attitude towards change	A firm faces continues changes and engages in adaptations to these changes
Easingwood and Beard (1996)	Management attitude towards risk	A firm undertakes risky projects and initiative
Mohrman et al. (1992)	Flat organizational structure	A firm maintains an organizational structure characterized by a small number of hierarchies and enable employees to communicate directly with anyone relevant for accomplishing their tasks
Mohrman et al. (1992)	Use of cross-functional teams in R&D	A firm frequently uses cross-functional teams in R&D activities
Shanklin and Ryans (1987)	R&D personnel movement	A firm enables R&D personnel movement across various organizational units
Von-Gilnow and Mohrman (1990)	Lateral career paths	A firm frequently uses lateral-technological career paths

Balkin and Gomez-Mejia (1984)	Incentive and group-based reward systems	A firm frequently uses incentive and group-based reward systems
Von-Gilnow and Mohrman (1990)	Decentralization of decision-making processes	A firm's decision-making processes are highly decentralized

Source: (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005, p. 126)

Grinstein & Goldman (2005) have reached additional conclusions connected to these company's corporate culture, such as the fact that emphasis on R&D goes beyond investment, it's the core of the company's activity, which is seen as prestigious by workers, that want to belong and be associated to it. Innovation and entrepreneurship are part of tech MNEs' DNA and valued skills in workers. Moreover, these companies tend to have distinct "patterns of work relations". The aforementioned flat organizational structure and lack of hierarchy reflect in strong interpersonal relationships among workers (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005).

To have good team efficiency in tech organizations, Panchelieva (2017) suggests that "the key factor is the development of a more sophisticated mix of values and norms, the development of personal competencies and skills of both leaders and employees in the IT organizations." (Panchelieva, 2017, p. 62). Another study, which analyzed 136 IT companies in the United States, argues that the performance of the high-technology⁸ firms benefits "when they can create social climate conditions of trust, cooperation, and shared codes and language" (Collins & Smith, 2006, p. 555).

Often *born global*, tech MNEs are not only selling their products and services to the entire world, but they also have multicultural teams of workers which, besides dealing with "easier" challenges such as "geographic distance, different time zones, specific regulations or laws", must deal with the complexity of working in intercultural teams (Böhm, 2013, p. 1).

Regarding the organizational culture of this type of firm, and because *born global* companies are usually relatively small and are young firms that start the internationalization process early on, they have alike organizational culture features. Zhan and Tansuhaj (2007)

⁸ The authors consider the following definition of high-technology firm "emphasize invention and innovation in their business strategy, deploy a significant percentage of their financial resources to R&D, employ a relatively high percentage of scientists and engineers in their workforce, and compete in worldwide, short-life-cycle product markets (Milkovich, 1987: 80)".

argue that 3 of the most important features are: “(1) international marketing orientation, (2) international entrepreneurial orientation, and (3) organizational learning orientation.” (Zhan & Tansuhaj, 2007, p. 60). Of these, highlight to the international entrepreneurial orientation, that “suggests that organizations must constantly seek to exploit the dynamics of their macro environment and task environments” (Zhan & Tansuhaj, 2007, p. 61), making *born global* typically less averse to risk and keener to innovate, to take chances and be proactive, as previously mentioned.

Chapter II. Methodology

The IM subject has been widely explored (Besler & Sezerelb, 2012; Rothlauf, 2014; Leca, 2014; Diwakar, 2014; Casanova & Miranda, 2015; Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016; Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017; Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018; Dimitrijević, Starčević, & Marjanović, 2019) as well as vary aspects related to MCTs (Fiedler & Mitchell, 1970; Dowling, Festing, Engle, & Sr., 2007; Kumar & Patrick, 2012; Böhm, 2013; Leca & Vranceanu, 2014; Hajro, Gibson, & Pudelko, 2015; Krawczyk-Brylka, 2016), but there is a lack of connection between research about IM and MCTs in the context of the tech industry, more specifically on tech MNEs. This research aimed at exploring that gap, lightening it by replying to the main question: how are tech MNEs approaching IM? Hence, this investigation was developed in the format of an applied research since it is “concerned with using the knowledge acquired through research to contribute directly to the understanding or resolution of a contemporary issue [IM] to generate new theories or test existing theories (Patton, 2002: 215)” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 24).

As said by Patton (1990), “research, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible” (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002, p. 20), and the method should be chosen as a “function of the research situation (Yin, 1994)” (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002, p. 20). The selection of both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies aimed at reaching better results through the exploitation of their complementarity, i.e. to “yield different types of intelligence about the study subject” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 38). This was done through an online questionnaire (Annex) with a total of 12 questions, both closed and open, aimed at managers of MCTs of tech multinationals and members of MCTs of tech multinationals.

The qualitative method, through the open questions, facilitated reaching a visualization of different people’s mindsets and opinions (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002) – from both managers and members MCTs of tech MNEs – allowing flexibility in their answers and for them to be able to share their personal views on the matter.

The quantitative method, through the closed questions, allowed, firstly, a better understanding of the socio-demographic data of the sample and, secondly, to establish a relation between the different written opinions and the mindset of the respondents, connecting them with the theory obtained from the literature review (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002).

The questionnaire had both a Portuguese and English version and was available for the entire month of June 2020. It was spread by convenience sampling, through direct emails to companies, to technology parks, through the professional social network LinkedIn of the author, by personal contacts, networks, and word of mouth.

By reaching tech MNEs of different sizes and from different countries of origin, the goal was to understand if there is any common ground between them as to the way they are managing diversity – or if they are doing it at all – in both the perspective from the manager towards the team and backward. Initially, the aim was to compare companies according to their size – micro, small/medium, large – and understand if there are common points regarding IM within same-size companies. As the collected answers were insufficient to establish this comparison, the sample was considered as a whole, regardless of the company size but attending to the main criteria: being a tech MNE.

Chapter III. Data collection and analysis

There was a total of 41 answers to the questionnaire, all of which were considered valid for this research. To facilitate the reading of the collected data, this chapter will be divided under the following subtopics:

- 1. Sample characterization
 - 1.1. Characterization of the managers' sample
 - 1.2. Characterization of the team members' sample
 - 1.3. Tech multinational enterprises' characterization
 - 1.4. Characterization of the teams lead by managers and the team members' teams

- 2. Discussion of the results
 - 2.1. Challenges on intercultural management and multiculturalism
 - 2.2. Intercultural management and perception of team performance and innovation

1. Sample characterization

From the sample of 41 individuals who replied to the questionnaire, the majority is male (63,41%) (Table 7). Approximately one-third of the individuals (34,15%) is a manager of a multicultural team of a tech MNE and 65,85% of the respondents are members of a multicultural team of a tech MNE. The managers' sample is mostly composed of men (85,71%) and the team members' sample is sex balanced, being composed of 51,85% men and 48,15% women (Table 7).

Table 7. Respondents' sex and sex of the managers and team members separately.

Sex	N. of respondents	%
Male	26	63,41
Female	15	36,56
		100
Manager's sex	14	34,15
Male	12	85,71
Female	2	14,29
		100
Team member's sex	27	65,85
Male	14	51,85
Female	13	48,15
		100

Considering the sample of 41 individuals, most of them are between 25 and 30 years old (53,66%), 14,63% are between 18 and 25 years old and 12,20% are between 30 and 35 years old (Table 8). The other 19,52% respondents are over 35 years old. The sample is composed of quite young workers, which resonates on their amount of years of professional experience: 56,10% of individuals have between 0 to 5 years of work experience and 24,39% have 5 to 10, which make up 80,49% of the sample (Table 8). The fact of the workforce being so young in the sample of tech MNEs' workers is a feature that one might relate to typical characteristics of tech enterprises such as their flat hierarchy or the less adverse attitude towards risk and change (Grinstein & Goldman, 2005).

Table 8. Respondents' age and years of professional experience

Age of the respondents		
	N. of individuals	%
18 - 25*	6	14,63
25 - 30	22	53,66
30 - 35	5	12,20
35 - 40	4	9,76
40 - 45	0	0,00
45 - 50	1	2,44
50 - 55	2	4,88
55 - 60	1	2,44
Over 60	0	0,00
Total	41	100
Years of professional experience		
0 - 5	23	56,10
5 - 10	10	24,39
10 - 15	3	7,32
15 - 20	2	4,88
Over 20	3	7,32
Total	41	100

*Respondents with the coincident number of the age range were asked to consider the first group (e.g.: a 25-years old respondent should reply 18-25 and not 25-30)

Regarding the sample's education level, most individuals hold a master's degree (51,22%) or a degree (26,83%), and the predominant background education areas are Engineering (31,43%) and Business & Management (20%) (Table 9).

Table 9. Respondents' educational background

Education		
	N. of individuals	%
High School	4	9,76
Degree	11	26,83
Post-graduation	4	9,76
Master's degree	21	51,22
PhD	1	2,44
	41	100
Education area		
Engineering	11	31,43
Business & Management	7	20,00
Other	7	20,00
IT	4	11,43
Human Resources	3	8,57
Languages & Humanities	2	5,71
Economics	1	2,86
	35	100

The sample is composed of individuals of 9 different nationalities, mainly Portuguese (64,10%) and Spanish (10,26%), original from Europe, South America, and Asia (if we admit Turkey as belonging to both Europe and Asia) (Table 10). The explanation for the high number of Portuguese respondents lies in the physical proximity of the companies to the author, as well as on the methods and networks used to disseminate the questionnaire, previously mentioned.

Table 10. Respondents' nationality

Respondents' nationality		
Portuguese	25	64,10
Spanish	4	10,26
Italian	2	5,13
Turkish	2	5,13
German	2	5,13
Brazilian	1	2,56
French	1	2,56
Russian	1	2,56
Swiss	1	2,56
Double nationality	2	5,13
Total	41	100

Besides having an overall view of the entire sample, it is fundamental to look further into both the managers and members of intercultural teams of tech MNEs' data separately.

1.1. Characterization of the managers' sample

Table 8 refers to the sex of both managers and members separately and acknowledges a significant difference between male team leaders (85,71%) and female team leaders.

Half the team members are between 25 and 30 years old (50%), followed by the age group of 35 to 40 (21,43%) and thirdly 50 to 55 years old (14,29%). Regarding the number of years of professional experience, managers are mostly 5 to 10 years experienced (42,86%), followed by 0 to 5 years (21,43%), and both the 15 to 20 and the over 20 years segment represent 14,29% each (Table 11).

Table 11. Managers' age and years of professional experience

Managers' age		
	N. of individuals	%
18 – 25*	0	0,00
25 - 30	7	50,00
30 - 35	1	7,14
35 - 40	3	21,43
40 - 45	0	0,00
45 - 50	1	7,14
50 - 55	2	14,29
55 - 60	0	0,00
Over 60	0	0,00
Total	14	100
Years of professional experience		
0 - 5	3	21,43
5 - 10	6	42,86
10 - 15	1	7,14
15 - 20	2	14,29
Over 20	2	14,29
Total	14	100

*Respondents with the coincident number of the age range were asked to consider the first group (e. g.: a 25-years old respondent should reply 18-25 and not 25-30).

Regarding the managers' education level, most managers hold a master's degree (42,86%) or a degree (35,71%), and the predominant background education areas are Engineering (28,57%) and Business & Management (28,57%) (Table 12).

The respondent managers have 4 different nationalities, being mainly Portuguese (71,43%) (Table 13). The 2 managers who have double nationality are German-Swiss and Portuguese-Brazilian.

Table 12. Managers' educational background

Manager's education level		
	N. of individuals	%
High School	1	7,14
Degree	5	35,71
Post-graduation	1	7,14
Master's degree	6	42,86
PhD	1	7,14
Total	14	100
Education Area		
Engineering	4	28,57
Business & Management	4	28,57
Other	3	21,43
IT	1	7,14
Human Resources	0	0,00
Languages & Humanities	1	7,14
Economics	1	7,14
Total	14	100

Table 13. Managers' nationality

Managers' nationality		
	N. of individuals	%
Portuguese	10	71,43
Swiss	1	7,14
Italian	1	7,14
Double nationality	2	20
Total	14	100

1.2. Characterization of the team members' sample

As previously explained, Table 7 refers to the team member's sample sex, which is balanced.

Most of the team members are between 25 and 30 years old (55,56%), followed by the age group between 18 and 25 (22,22%) and thirdly 30 to 35 years old (14,81%). Regarding the number of years of professional experience, team members are considerably most 0 to 5 years experienced (74,04%), followed by 5 to 10 years (14,81%). The team member's sample, like the manager's one, is also quite young, which reflects in the number of years of professional experience.

Table 14. Team members' age and years of professional experience

Team members' age		
	N. of individuals	%
18 - 25*	6	22,22
25 - 30	15	55,56
30 - 35	4	14,81
35 - 40	1	3,70
40 - 45	0	0,00
45 - 50	0	0,00
50 - 55	0	0,00
55 - 60	1	3,70
Over 60	0	0,00
Total	27	100
Years of professional experience		
0 - 5	20	74,04
5 - 10	4	14,81
10 - 15	2	7,41
15 - 20	0	0,00
Over 20	1	3,70
Total	27	100

* Respondents with the coincident number of the age range were asked to consider the first group (e.g.: a 25-years old respondent should reply 18-25 and not 25-30). The same applies to the years of professional experience

Regarding the team members' education level, more than half of them hold a master's degree (55,56%) and 22,22% hold a degree. The predominant background education areas

are Engineering (40,74%) and Business & Management, IT and Languages & Humanities, each corresponding to 11,11% of team member respondents (Table 15).

The team members have 8 different nationalities. They are mostly Portuguese (38,46%) and Spanish (10,26%), but there are also representatives from diverse countries, such as Germany, Turkey or Russia (Table 16).

Table 15. Team members' educational background

Team members' education level		
	N. of individuals	%
High School	3	11,1
Degree	6	22,22
Post-graduation	3	11,11
Master's degree	15	55,56
PhD	0	0,00
Total	27	100
Education area		
Engineering	11	40,74
Business & Management	3	11,11
Other	6	22,22
IT	3	11,11
Human Resources	1	3,70
Languages & Humanities	3	11,11
Economics	0	0,00
Total	27	100

Table 16. Team members' nationality

Team members' nationality		
	N. of individuals	%
Portuguese	15	38,46
Spain	4	10,26
Germany	2	5,13
Turkey	2	5,13
Italy	1	2,56
Brazil	1	2,56
France	1	2,56
Russia	1	2,56
Total	27	100

1.3. Tech multinational enterprises' characterization

From the 41 respondents, 5 didn't disclose the company they work for and a total of 5 were working for the same 2 companies (2 for the same company and 3 for another one). There is a representation of a total of 38 different companies in the sample. The 38 companies are mostly large⁹ (71,05%), and there is a minor representation of small/medium size companies (18,42%) and micro companies (10,52%) (Table 17). The sample of small and medium companies is not significant enough to make a legitimate comparison between them and the large companies, which, as previously explained in the methodology, was the initial idea. Therefore, the sample was entirely considered because the companies, regardless of their size, are tech MNEs and, therefore, fit the criteria for the primary focus of the investigation question.

Table 17. Tech multinational enterprises' size

Tech MNEs' size		
	N. of companies	%
Micro	4	10,53
Small / Medium	7	18,42
Large	27	71,05
Total	38	100

Regarding the companies' base location, almost 80% of all the sample companies are based in a single country (78,95%). This tendency verifies in all 3 groups of companies. Moreover, 7,89% of all companies are based in 3 or more than 3 countries (Table 18). This is relevant data because having multiple headquarters might influence the organizational culture and practices within the organization (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007).

Regarding countries of trade, 60,53% of all the sample companies trade all over the world, in over 10 countries (Table 19). Within this percentage, the large companies stand out, as 81,48% of them are trading in over 10 countries. Regarding small and medium companies, the most significant percentage is 71,43%, which corresponds to those operating in less than 5 countries.

⁹ Companies' size criteria: Large (over 50 workers, annual turnover over 10m. €€; Small/Medium (up to 50 workers, annual turnover under 10m. €€ / Micro (up to 10 workers, annual turnover under 2m. €€) (INE, 2020).

Table 18. Tech multinational enterprises' size and number of countries with their headquarters

Tech MNEs' size		N. of countries with headquarters							
	N. of companies	1	%	2	%	3	%	>3	%
Micro	4	2	50	1	4	1	4	0	0
Small/Medium	7	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	27	21	77,78	1	3,7	2	7,41	3	11,11
Entire sample	38	30	78,95	2	5,26	3	7,89	3	7,89

Table 19. Tech multinational enterprises' size and number of countries where they trade

Tech MNEs' size		N. of countries where they trade					
	N. of companies	<5	%	5 – 10	%	>10	%
Micro	4	1	25	2	50	1	25
Small/Medium	7	5	71,43	2	28,57	0	0
Large	27	2	7,41	3	11,11	22	81,48
Entire sample	38	8	21,05	7	18,42	23	60,53

The small/medium companies are mostly present in 2 continents (57,14%). More than half the large ones, on the other hand, are present in 5 countries (55,56%). Taking all the sample into consideration, most of the companies trade in all 5 continents (42,11%), in 2 continents (23,68%) or in 3 (18,42%) (Table 20). This information is relevant to understand the companies' level of internationalization, which may affect management practices (Brewster, Mayrhofer, & Smale, 2016).

Table 20. Tech multinational enterprises' size and number of continents where they trade

Tech MNEs' size		N. of continents where they trade									
	N. of companies	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
Micro	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0	1	25
Small/Medium	7	2	28,57	4	57,14	1	14,29	0	0	0	0
Large	27	1	3,70	4	14,81	5	18,52	2	7,41	15	55,56
Entire sample	38	4	10,53	9	23,68	7	18,42	2	5,26	16	42,11

1.4. Characterization of the teams lead by managers and the team members' teams

Most of the managers are leading a team of 5 to 10 elements (35,71%), of up to 4 elements or from 11 to 15 elements (both 21,43%) (Table 21).

Table 21. Size of the managers' multicultural teams

Size of the managers' multicultural teams		
	N. of managers	%
0 - 4	3	21,43
5 - 10	5	35,71
11 - 15	3	21,43
16 - 20	1	7,14
> 30	2	14,29
Total	14	100

The members, on the other hand, mostly belong to teams of 11 to 15 elements (25,93%), of 5 to 10 elements and over 30 elements (both 22,22%) (Table 22).

Table 22. Size of the multicultural teams

Size of the multicultural teams		
	N. of elements	%
0 - 5*	5	18,52
5 - 10	6	22,22
10 - 15	7	25,93

*Respondents with the coincident number of elements were asked to consider the first group (e.g.: a respondent in a team of 5 should reply 0-5 and not 5-10)

A considerable majority of the managers have up to 4 different nationalities represented within the elements of the teams (71,43%) (Table 23). Altogether, the total of 14 managers, which are Portuguese, Swiss, Italian or have double nationality (Table 13), are dealing with elements of a total of 24 nationalities, mainly Portuguese (in 9/14 teams) and Brazilian (in 7/14 teams), but as diverse as Dominican (2/14 teams), Moroccan (1/14 teams) or Malaysian (1/14 teams) (Table 24).

Table 23. Number of different nationalities on managers' teams

Number of different nationalities on managers' team		
	N. of respondents	%
0 - 5	10	71,43
5 - 10	3	21,43
10 - 15	1	7,14
> 15	0	0
Total	14	100

Table 24. Different nationalities on managers' teams

Different nationalities on managers' teams			
Nationality	Presence in teams	Nationality	Presence in teams
Brazilian	7	Moroccan	1
British	3	Malaysian	1
Chilian	1	Mozambican	1
Dominican	2	Polish	2
Dutch	1	Portuguese	9
Emirati	1	Russian	3
French	3	South African	1
German	3	Spanish	5
Greek	1	Turkish	1
Indian	1	Ukrainian	1
Italian	2	Uruguay	1
Lithuanian	1	Venezuelan	3

The team members of MCTs are working within a total of 39 nationalities from all over the world. Portuguese are still the most represented nationality, being present in 16 teams, followed by Italian (in 12 teams), Brazilian and French (both present in 9 teams) (Table 25). However, the respondents' teams are composed of elements from the 5 continents, from Argentinean (in 1 team) to Chinese (in 4 teams), Lebanese (in 1 team), or Zealander (in 1 team) (Table 25).

One can state that both respondents, managers, and team members, are dealing with a significant amount of diversity in their workplace. Albeit we are focusing on the respondents' nationality, it is important to remember that this [nationality] is just one among endless cultural features of the respondents (Böhm, 2013; Thorrold, 2016).

Table 25. Different nationalities on team member's teams

Different nationalities on team member's teams					
Nationality	Presence in teams	Nationality	Presence in teams	Nationality	Presence in teams
American	7	Estonian	1	Moroccan	2
Angolan	1	French	9	Mozambican	1
Argentinean	1	German	6	Zealander	1
Azerbaijan	1	Greek	2	Philippine	2
Brazilian	9	Indian	4	Polish	5
British	4	Iranian	1	Portuguese	16
Bulgarian	1	Irish	2	Russian	1
Canadian	1	Italian	12	Romanian	6
Chinese	4	Japanese	1	Scottish	1
Croatian	1	Lebanese	1	Slovakian	2
Czech	1	Lithuanian	1	Spanish	7
Danish	1	Malaysian	1	Swedish	1
Dutch	3	Mexican	2	Ukrainian	1

2. Discussion of the results

Having a clearer understanding of the respondents' social-demographic background, the companies' level of internationalization, and the composition of the teams, we can now dwell over the responses of the 12 questions to both managers and team members (full questionnaire on Annex 1).

The questions aimed essentially at understanding if both managers and team members are aware of IM and its tools, if they practice it, their relation towards multiculturalism, and, lastly, if they see both IM and multiculturalism as a cost or as an opportunity for their companies.

When asked if they were aware of the IM concept, both half the managers (50%) and team members (51,85%) answered positively. Afterward, both groups were asked to explain what the concept of IM means to them.

When defining the concept of IM, managers often used words such as “adapt”, “inclusive” or “understand”, showing the acknowledgment of the need of understanding the different cultural backgrounds of their team members. Most managers highlighted the importance of this need resorting to the “use of practices/techniques that allow, appropriately, to manage dynamics and cultural differences between the members of a team/organization” and enhancing critical matters such as “managing without a cultural bias”, or to act as mediators in moments of disagreements by “understanding the different ways of thinking, the different ways of judging/making decision based on the way my team members were raised and educated”. A total of 4 out of the 12 managers who replied to the question showed unfamiliarity toward the subject.

The team members of MCTs were asked the same question and several answered mentioning only that IM is managing individuals of different nationalities, without further insights (7/27). Nonetheless, the remaining team members shared more truthful definitions and insights by explaining IM as the “management of different cultures in the workspace, as a way to enhance results through the use of positive aspects of each culture”, referring to the need of “managing the different cultures in a way they work efficiently” and mostly enhancing the need of “being sensible to the fact that different people, depending on their culture, might interpret the same action in wildly different ways”. Most team member's respondents seem to acknowledge, at least partially, what IM is. This is a very positive aspect,

since acknowledgement comes as one of the most important aspects of IM and it is fundamental to implement strategies of comprehensive diversity management (Böhm, 2013; Casanova & Miranda, 2015; Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018).

For 71,43% of the managers, it is the first time in their professional career managing an MCT. Regardless of their inexperience, only 1 of them has received training in IM or similar subjects. As for the team members, only 2 (7,41%) have received training specifically in IM, whereas 5 (18,52%) have received it in similar areas (Table 26), namely "religions and engineering" and "intercultural studies", both during their studies and not at the job site. The remaining 3 have received training in "training for work in a multicultural environment: how to avoid prejudice" and "intercultural communication". These results display a great lack of training in IM and interculturality. In did, in the entire universe of the sample of 41 individuals belonging to 38 different companies, a mere total of 4 has received training on the subject from the company. This is particularly troubling for managers, especially considering that the majority of the respondents are leading a multicultural team for the first time. Training about IM or interculturality is essential for multicultural teams and managers to develop their skills (Leca & Vranceanu, 2014).

Table 26. Managers' and team members' reply to questions #5.1 and #5, respectively

5.1. Did you receive training in Intercultural Management or Interculturality before taking over the management of the team? If you have received training in similar areas, select the option "Similar".
 5. Have you ever received training in Intercultural Management or Interculturality If you have received training in similar areas, select the option "Similar".

Managers' reply to question #5.1		
	N. of respondents	%
Yes	1	7,14
No	13	92,86
Similar	0	0
Total	14	100
Team members' reply to question #5		
Yes	2	7,41
No	20	74,07
Similar	5	18,52
Total	27	100

Even though the best practice of receiving training in IM is not a reality for almost all the respondents – both managers and team members – they do recognize its importance (once again, a positive reality). When asked the question “Do you believe that this type of training [IM or interculturality] or tools could be useful for a better performance of the multicultural team in which you are inserted and for better knowledge and understanding of the cultural differences of the team members?”, more than half of the team members have replied 5 (29,63%) or 6 (33,33%) in a scale of 0 [absolutely useless] to 6 [very useful] (Table 27).

Table 27. Team member’s reply to question #6

6. Do you believe that this type of training [IM or interculturality] or tools could be useful for a better performance of the multicultural team in which you are inserted and for better knowledge and understanding of the cultural differences of the team members?

Team member’s reply to question #6		
Scale	N. of respondents	%
0	0	0
1	1	3,70
2	0	0
3	4	14,81
4	5	18,52
5	8	29,63
6	9	33,33
Total	27	100

Scale: 0 [absolutely useless] to 6 [very useful]

Managers seem to recognize the same importance to IM. Regardless the lack of previous training in the subject, when asked if they were familiar with any type of IM tool (and given examples of tools), almost all managers replied no (85,71%) but 76,92% of the ones who didn’t know any tool replied that they would be interested in learning about it. The remaining 23,08% alleged to maybe be interested to learn about it (Table 28). Despite their basic knowledge and idea of the IM concept, managers demonstrate a lack of ability to identify IM’s tools. Even though knowledge and awareness, as continuously mentioned, are basic needed skills or mindsets for IM, methods and tools should not be disregarded by managers: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions, the Model of Culture, Trompenaars’ Categories

and Dimensions of Cultural Diversity in Business, Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni's Components of CCC, Culture Assimilators, etc., are very simple tools which positively affect the consciousness, the overall posture, the understanding, the inclusion of the team's individuals, ultimately leading to the teams' better performance (Stahl & Tung, 2015; Thorrold, 2016).

From the only 2 managers who stated being familiar with any of the given IM tools, 1 was acquainted with the Cultural Dimensions of Hofstede and Trompenaars' Categories and Dimensions and the other one with Culture Assimilators.

Table 28. Members' reply to questions #11 and #11.1

11. Are you familiar with any type of Intercultural Management tool?
 11.1 Would you like to familiarize yourself with this type of tools?

Managers' reply to questions #11 and #11.1		
Q. #11	N. of respondents	%
Yes	2	14,29
No	12	85,71
I don't know	0	0
Total	14	100
Q. #11.1	N. of respondents	%
Yes	9	76,92
No	0	0
Maybe	3	23,08
Total	12*	100

*The 2 managers who knew IM tools and didn't reply this question.

Interestingly, even though most managers were not aware of potential IM tools, 78% responded affirmatively to the question "Do you think you practice this kind of management [IM]?" (Table 29). In did, 11 of the managers replied to the question "What kind of Intercultural Management practices do you/your company have?", referring to their best practices. Among them, managers have mentioned practices such as:

- "I try to consider, when I distribute tasks, if certain nationalities tend to be more individualistic or if they like to work collectively. / Whenever possible to speak the language of the team member. / The type of greetings is very important, between the

two kisses and a greeting hand, both can offend, so I try to be careful in that respect”
Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience

- “Identify points of possible rupture caused by cultural differences and try to mitigate them by always showing what brings us closer instead of what distances us.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “Take into account the preferred type of communication, that is, some cultures like a more direct and professional communication (Russian for example) while other cultures (Brazilian or Venezuelan, for example) prefer a more personal and familiar approach.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “The opportunity for team members to share [their] traditional gastronomic delicacies.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 0-5 years professional experience*
- “[Common] Leisure activity, sport, dinners.” *Male, Italian, 35-40 years old, 10-15 years professional experience*
- “Humor is a very important key in the management of an international team, and I try to use it whenever possible. When misused, it can easily break relationships due to some offense that may have been inadvertently said, but, when done with some cautious tact, humor can quite free some communication difficulties between members of different cultural backgrounds” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “Integration of employees from different cultures. / Creation of links between them. / Conflict management due to this diversity” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “I encourage my team member to speak out their mind, always ensuring that we focus on the issue to solve and not a person to blame. The concept of 'Giving face' in group meetings is up most important to maintain a healthy and productive culture

in the company. On the other hand, if it comes to individual discussions, Asians are more 'to be told' over to 'make them understanding!'.” *Male, Swiss, 50-55 years old, over 20 years professional experience*

- “We guarantee that, for example, all holidays are respected according to each one's culture.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “We operate in different cultures that have different needs and performance parameters. We seek, as a brand, to always respect these without losing our essence.” *Female, Portuguese-Brazilian, 45-50 years old, over 20 years professional experience*
- “There are no Intercultural Management practices in the company, however at an individual level we try to adapt to individual cultural issues.” *Female, Portuguese, 30-35 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*

Table 29. Managers’ reply to question #4.2

4.2. Do you think you practice this kind of management?

Managers’ reply to question #4.2		
Q. #4.2	N. of respondents	%
Yes	11	78,57
No	1	7,14
I don’t know	2	14,29
Total	14	100

Complementing the insights gathered from the above question number 4.3, managers were also asked if “As manager of a multicultural team, do you seek to inform yourself about cultural differences between your team members and raise awareness of them? If you do, please explain how you do it, and if not, why you don't.”. Replies varied, but almost every manager said he does so, and through various ways such as:

- “Yes. In the frequent evaluation meetings, I try to understand if the team members felt, at some point, that their cultural differences had some kind of negative impact on their work. Later I try to understand what measures / practices I can adopt that

avoid similar situations in the future.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 0-5 years professional experience*

- “Yes, I try through individual and group meetings to understand what kind of tensions and difficulties may be going on, especially when they are not so visible and external. Sometimes, even if the agent does not explicitly say, there are problems mostly caused by cultural ignorance (not in the bad sense, simply the lack of knowledge) and which are easily resolved through joint work mediated by someone with a little more tact and multicultural experience.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “After some experience working with teams from different cultures, we can create a behavioral model for people of the same culture. Even though each case is different, it helps to understand the reality of the culture in which a member is in order to understand how to make an optimized management. / In addition to normal knowledge of different cultures, constant dialogue with team members helps to understand their realities.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “Yes. Either experiencing that culture (through travelling for instants) or talking more to that person at a personal level. Never underestimate the power of having a beer with someone! [...] Age also is a hugely important factor.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*
- “Yes, in all personal meetings there is a conversation about the country of origin and culture, in addition to work and performance.” *Male, Portuguese, 35-40 years old, 10-15 years professional experience*
- “Yes, I have a weekly synchronization routine with each member of the team, and I collect feedback on teamwork and possible conflicts.” *Female, Portuguese, 30-35 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*

- “I believe it is essential that the members know the different repertoires of the team. This way, we explore the team’s potential in the innovation [on the way we approach problems], thought and practice.” *Female, Portuguese-Brazilian, 45-50 years old, over 20 years professional experience*
- “Yes, by organizing meetings outside of the work site.” *Male, Portuguese, 50-55 years old, 15- 20 years professional experience*

Hence, there seems to be a general concern on the managers’ side to recognize their team members’ cultural differences and to make all members aware of them, whether they are doing it through formal feedback team meetings which include this topic, or they are promoting social gathering among team members to encourage informal learning and awareness. This tendency reflects regardless the sex, age, and professional years of experience of the respondents. Even if there is a lack of theoretical knowledge of IM, in great part it appears to be compensated by pragmatism and common sense.

2.1. Challenges on intercultural management and multiculturality

Part of the questionnaire to both managers and team members aimed at understanding the respondents' perception of the difficulties or challenges which arise from multiculturality. It is only through the recognition of the difficulties felt by managers and team members that one can know to which IM tools should resort to overcome them and, thus, improve the teams' performance (Rothlauf, 2014; Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018).

Exactly half of the managers (50%) have stated that they have experienced difficulties in managing their team for reasons directly related to cultural differences (Table 30). The main identified causes for conflict, mentioned by 5 of the 7 respondent managers, were language and different values, which lead to behaviors that can be misinterpreted. Different ways of acting, thinking, adapting, discrimination, and harassment were also mentioned. One manager reinforced the problems arising from the different values, attitudes, ways of communicating, and overall personal way of facing the job, by stating that:

- “[...] posture in the workplace varies greatly between cultures. My Russian agent, for example, hates being disturbed with jokes while working, separating the professional from the personal part. My Brazilian or Venezuelan agents are just the opposite, being offended if we are too cold or professional. Sometimes it is difficult to combine these two sides of the same coin.” *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*

He further exemplifies:

- “I also had a situation with a Colombian agent whose attitude and method of communication was extremely indirect and when that agent and my Russian Agent (extremely direct) had to discuss something, I had to mediate the conversation or they were always offended by each other's attitude. *Male, Portuguese, 25-30 years old, 5-10 years professional experience*

Lastly, the same manager reinforces that some agents prioritize and are driven by performance, whereas others are more highly motivated by a positive workplace environment and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Over a third of the team members' respondents (40,74%) have experienced difficulties or problems with other colleagues directly resulting from cultural differences (Table 30). When asked to clarify the type of issues they have experienced, all 10 team members mentioned the discrepancy of values, which lead to conflict in various ways, or are misinterpreted by the respondents, such as: "Americans being too work-oriented disregarding the balance", "different ways of approaching a problem/situation", "[...] Dutch people are very direct. If they don't like something, they say it right away and with no shame.", "differences in work ethics", "Deep differences in mentality or values in relation to meeting schedules, project planning and delivering results". These are some of the discrepancies arose from different values, but respondents also refer to problems such as discrimination (4 in 10) or "different kind of communications and expectations, [which lead to] misunderstandings". However, and unlike the managers, none of the team members mentioned language in specific as one of the possible causes leading to misunderstandings or conflict. In fact, MCTs members' different values and attitudes, represent one of the biggest challenges for management (Henderson, 2014; Onyusheva & Changjongpradit, 2018).

The 10 team members which have replied yes to the question 7, stating they had experienced difficulties or problems with other colleagues directly resulting from cultural differences, were also asked if management steps in/intervenes to resolve existing cultural differences. Slightly over half (54,55%), 6 of the respondents, said that it does, and the rest of the respondents (45,45%) said that management doesn't intervene. The 6 respondents were asked to specify the way that management steps in. They have mentioned strategies such as "feedback sessions, team events or regular meetings", the attempt to "balance the cultural differences among team members", the "expectations' management", and, in one case, that management "put in place a management training and one of the modules is cultural differences". These are all good practices and attempts to mitigate cultural issues, but only half the managers of all the teams have done it. We lack the explanation as to why don't the other managers intervene, but possible explanations could be lack of awareness, lack of knowledge on how to intervene, or negligent management.

Table 30. Managers' and team members' reply to questions #6 and #7, respectively

6. Have you ever experienced difficulties in managing your team for reasons directly related to cultural differences?

7. As a member of a multicultural team, have you ever experienced difficulties or problems with other colleagues directly resulting from cultural differences?

Managers' reply to question #6		
Q. #6	N. of respondents	%
Yes	7	50,00
No	7	50,00
Total	14	100
Team members' reply to question #7		
Q. #7	N. of respondents	%
Yes	11	40,74
No	16	59,26
Total	27	100

2.2. Intercultural management and perception of team performance and innovation

The questionnaire included 4 closed questions to both managers and team members which aimed at understanding their perception of team performance and innovation connected to IM. Firstly, we will analyze the managers' responses.

There is high consensus within the managers' sample regarding the need to be aware of their team members' cultural differences to assure the proper functioning of the team (Figure 8). They also strongly believe that this awareness has a direct impact on their teams' performance (Figure 9).

The same pattern of awareness repeats concerning the managers' perspective over the importance of team members' consciousness about their cultural differences: 11 of the 14 managers stated that it is very relevant for members of multicultural teams to be aware of their cultural differences to work together properly (Figure 10).

Figure 8. Question 7 of the managers' questionnaire results

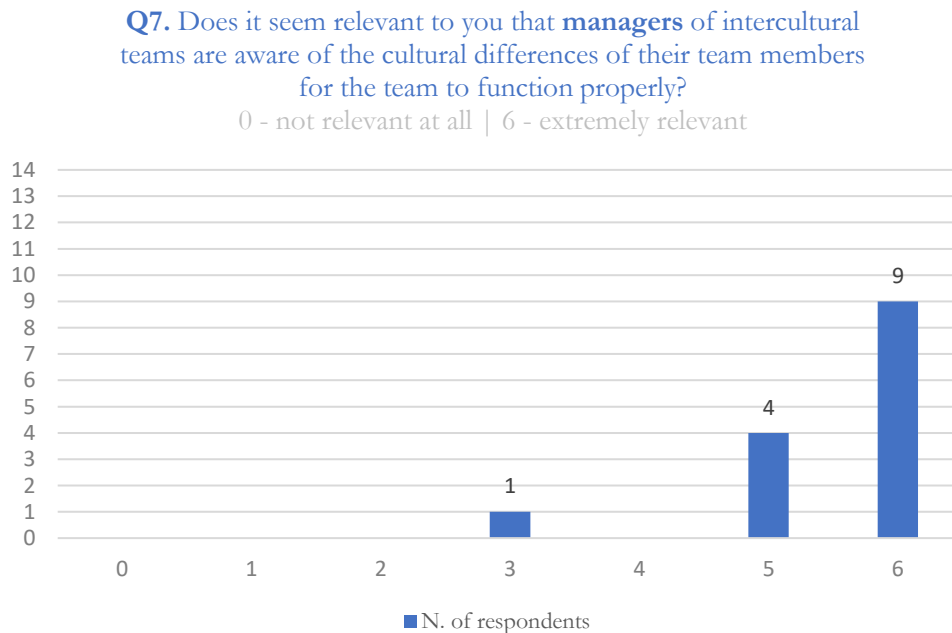


Figure 9. Question 8 of the managers' questionnaire results

Q8. Do you believe that **managers** of intercultural teams being aware of cultural differences between members of multicultural teams impacts the team performance?
0 - doesn't impact at all | 6 - impacts a lot

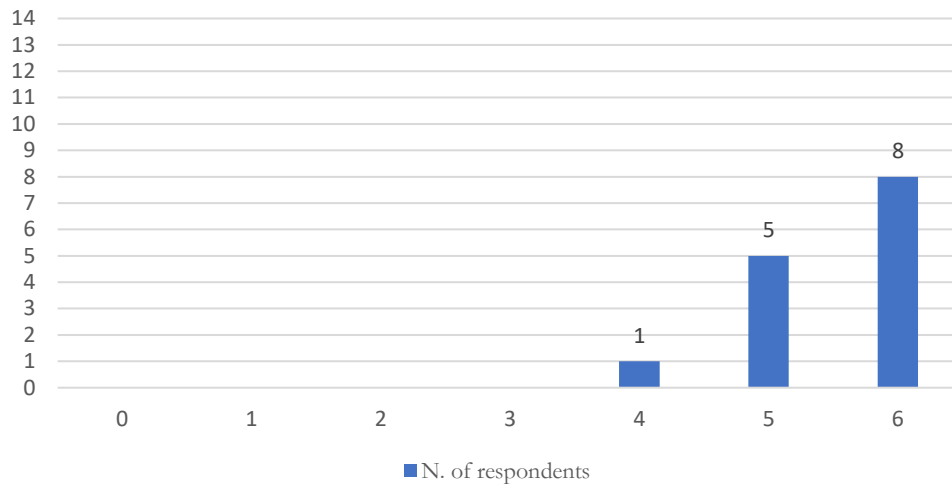
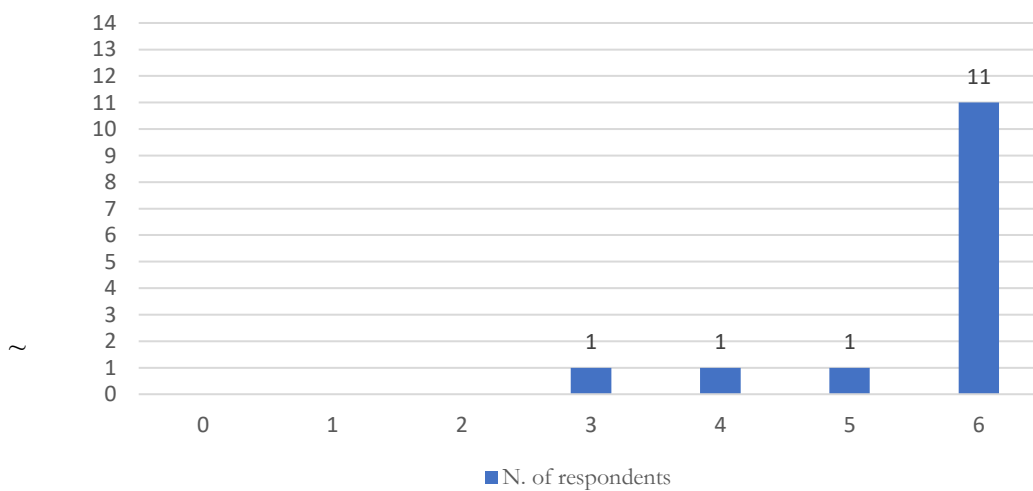


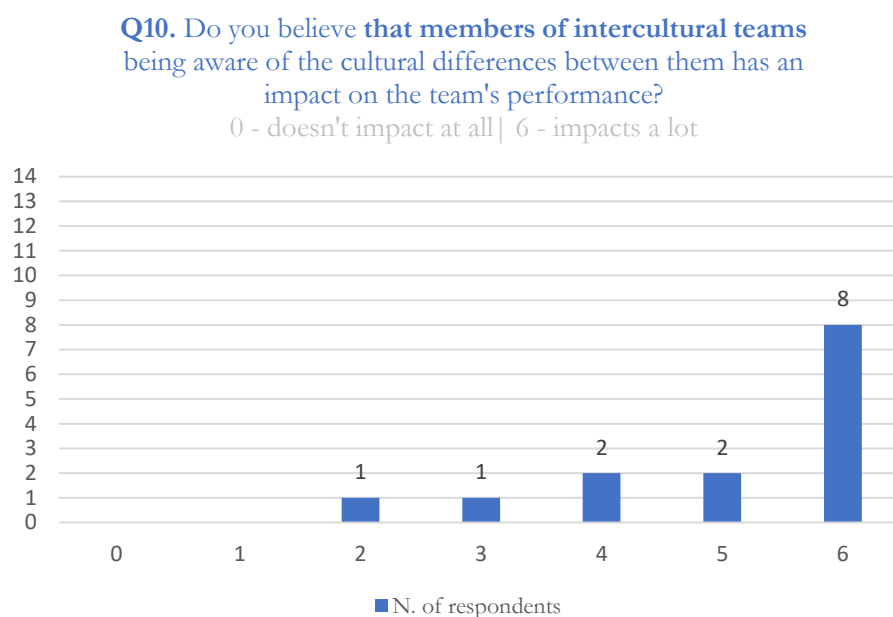
Figure 10. Question 9 of the managers' questionnaire results

Q9. How relevant does it seem to you that **members of intercultural teams** are aware of the cultural differences between them for the team to work together properly?
0 - not relevant at all | 6 - very relevant



The results concerning the managers' perspective on the relation between team members' awareness of their cultural differences and team performance are not so homogeneous. Most managers (8/14) (Figure 11) consider that members of intercultural teams being aware of the cultural differences between them impacts a lot the team's performance. Nonetheless, there is an even higher consensus about the importance of this awareness for MCTs' members to be able to properly work together, as previously seen (Figure 10).

Figure 11. Question 10 of the managers' questionnaire results

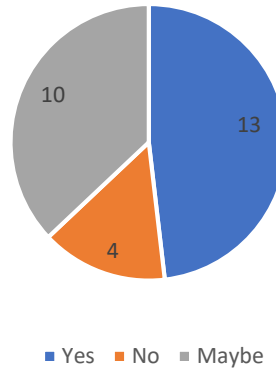


As for the team members, nearly half of them (13/27) believe that problems arose from cultural differences between team members impact the team's performance. The other half (10/27) is not sure about it, having replied *maybe*. Only 4 team members don't think that these matters are connected (Figure 12).

Overall, the respondents' replies corroborate the various studies connecting IM to MCT's performance, which state that if managers of MCTs want to lead their teams to their best possible performance, both them and their team members must be utterly aware of their cultural differences (Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007; Onyusheva & Changiongpradit, 2018).

Figure 12. Question 8 of the team members' questionnaire results

Q8. Do you believe that the problems arose from cultural differences between team members impact the teams' performance?



Team members recognize some degree of lack of knowledge regarding they're colleagues' culture or, at least, they recognize a not very deep knowledge over their colleagues' culture and cultural differences. When asked “as a member of a multicultural team, do you know the culture and cultural differences of your colleagues?”, on a scale of 0 to 6, where 0 is “I don't know them at all” and 6 is “I know them very well”, the average of responses was 4,11 (Figure 13).

Concerning the type of management toward the MCTs team members', most respondents said there was a high concern from their managers regarding the team's cultural differences. This was not the case to all respondents, though. On a scale where 0 stands for “the team leader doesn't care at all” and 6 stands for “the team leader cares a lot”, the average of the respondents was 4,3 (Figure 15), which indicates an overall positive attitude from the managers, yet quite improvable.

Figure 13. Question 9 of the team members' questionnaire results

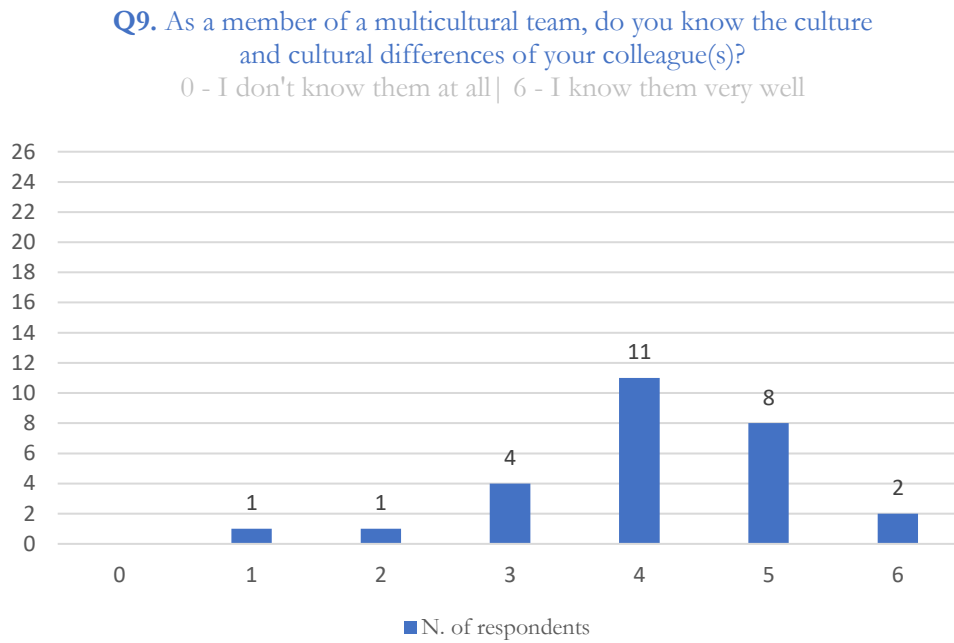


Figure 14. Question 10 of the team members' questionnaire results

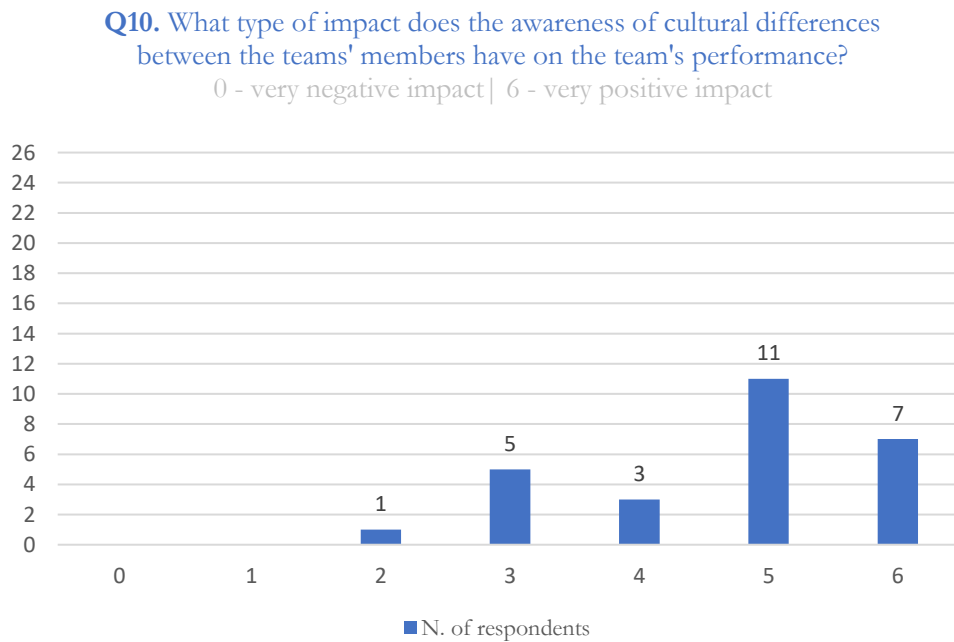
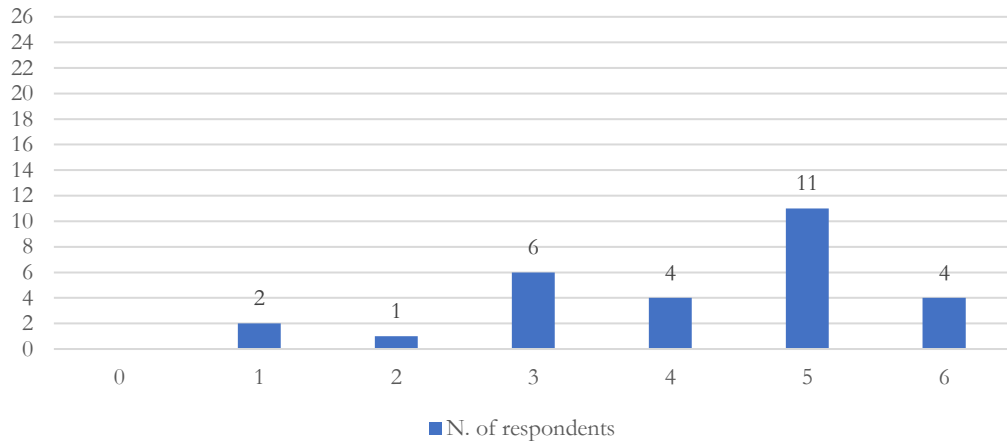


Figure 15. Question 11 of the team members' questionnaire results

Q11. The team leader is concerned with the cultural differences of the team and handles them well, either by encouraging the cultural differences of the members as an engine of innovation or by making them aware of them.
 0 - The team leader doesn't care at



The last question of both questionnaires provides good clearance regarding the overall perspective of the approached topics of awareness, conflict, and innovation within multicultural teams.

Question 12 from the managers' questionnaire delivers the following clear insights: (1) that managers think that multicultural teams clearly represent an opportunity for the company, (2) that they are more innovative in problem solving, and (3) that they are more difficult to manage (Figure 17).

Question 12 from the team members' questionnaire also provides important insights from the team members' perspective: like the managers, team members clearly believe that (1) multicultural teams are an opportunity for the company (19 out of 27), (2) that multicultural companies are more stimulant to work (14 out of 27), and (3) that they are as conflictive as monocultural teams (14 out of 27). Interestingly, 6 respondents said that they believe that multicultural companies are less conflictive (Figure 16).

All insights are aligned with Thorrold (2016) and Böhm (2013), which defend cultural diversity as a source of great enrichment and opportunity for companies, when properly managed. The insights are also supported by Stahl and Tung (2015), which stated that MCT's

have often been wrongly perceived as a bigger cost than an opportunity for companies even though that is a misconception.

Figure 16. Question 12 of the team members' questionnaire results

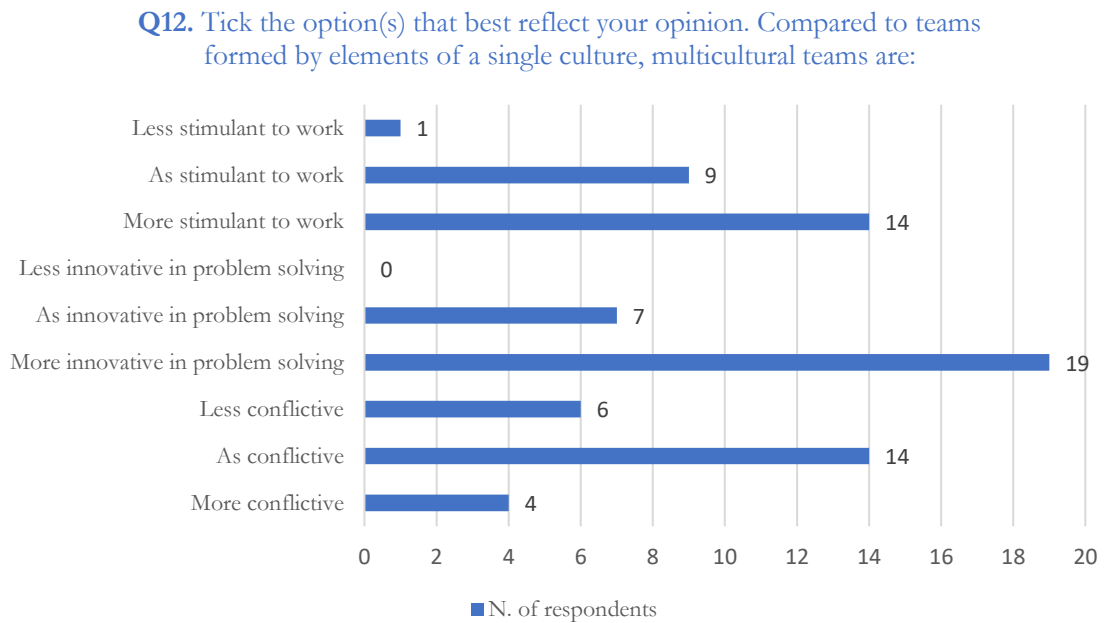
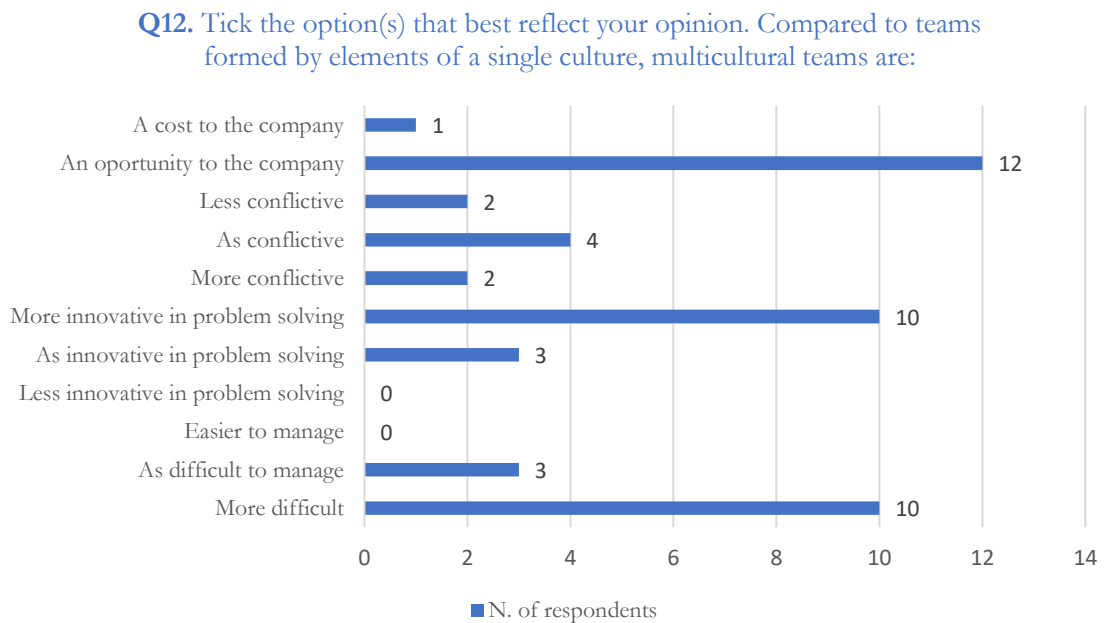


Figure 17. Question 12 of the managers' questionnaire results



Chapter IV. Conclusions

The literature review suggests that IM is indisputably important for the prosperity of international organizations at all levels of their operations and interactions. The world, the economy, and the world citizens are increasingly more globalized and connected, and, as part of this result, MCTs will continue to grow. Tech MNEs have special organizational features and they are often born globals, operating all over the world, frequently with multicultural teams, thus being IM crucial for them to be well-managed at the fullest.

The main findings of this research suggest that managers and team members of MCTs lack the theoretical knowledge of IM and that tech MNEs are barely providing any training on the subject. However, it is argued that, even without training, managers and MCTs are aware of the concept of IM, of its importance, and they show interest in learning about it. There is a considerable amount of good practices of IM in use, which mostly originate from pragmatism and common sense. Regardless, managers and MCTs' team members identify several problems and challenges within their teams that originate from the lack of comprehension of different cultures. Managers have a crucial role as mediators of these differences and must enhance their efforts toward exposing cultural differences and promote the deeper knowledge of their team members. These issues would likely be better and more efficiently addressed (and probably decrease) if managers and MCTs received training in IM or similar subjects. Companies themselves can take measures of inclusive management, promoting policies and activities in this direction. Both managers and team members think of MCTs as an opportunity for companies and as more innovative in problem-solving, while being aware of the challenges they present. This awareness incites openness to learn, which sustains the suggestion that the reinforcement of IM training, through its methods, tools, and best practices, would increase the teams' performance on tech multinational enterprises.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

One of this research's limitation is the big number of Portuguese respondents, which may have led to an unwanted cultural bias. Further research should be broadened in this aspect.

Another limitation is that the sole considered criterion for the sample companies was being tech MNEs. There is a large number of further other criteria that may be considered for future research that hasn't been accommodated in this study, such as the size of the MNEs or their years of existence. These are 2 factors, among others, that may influence the way that companies are managing diversity. The companies' level of internationalization is another aspect that may impact their way of managing diversity and that can be explored in further depth.

Furthermore, the survey for managers and MCT's members was spread during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a time of great uncertainty. This may, on one hand, have decreased the number of replies, since it was a time of great distress and change of routines; on the other hand, it may have conditioned the state of mind of participants.

Additional data can be collected about the individuality of the respondents which may impact their perspective on multiculturalism, such as having studied abroad, being at work in their original country or as emigrants, and so on.

In face of the new COVID-19 pandemic, new GVTs, that were already existing in tech MNEs, are likely to spread and become a new reality. This will represent additional challenges for IM, as previously seen. It is another subject to be further explored.

Existing literature relating IM to tech MNEs is insufficient and lacks further practical insights to ultimately improve these companies' performance, therefore there is space for more research and development of new methods adapted to the tech MNE's culture particularities.

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Annex 1. Online questionnaire for managers and members of multicultural teams of tech multinational enterprises

"Intercultural Management in Multinational Enterprises - A study case on how Tech Multinational Enterprises are managing diversity"

Confidentiality *

I agree to answer this questionnaire. **I allow** the company's name to be disclosed in the presentation of the dissertation's results. I read and understood the explanation provided to me.

I agree to answer this questionnaire. **I don't allow** the company's name to be disclosed in the presentation of the dissertation's results. I read and understood the explanation provided to me.

Contact (fill in this field if you allow the master student to contact you after submitting this questionnaire to clarify any doubts)

Sex *

Female Male Other

Age *

If you have a coincident number of the age range, please considerer the first group (e.g.: if you're 25-years old, you should reply 18-25 and not 25-30).

- 18 - 25
- 25 - 30
- 30 - 35
- 35 - 40
- 40 - 45
- 45 - 50
- 50 - 55
- 50 - 60
- Over 60

Education *

- High school
- Degree
- Post-graduation
- Master's degree
- PhD

Education area *

Nationality *

Professional experience *

If you have a coincident number of the years range, please considerer the first group (e.g.: if you have 15 years of professional experience, you should reply 10-15 and not 15-20).

- 0 - 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- 10 - 15 years
- 15 - 20 years
- Over 20 years

Company *

Country(ies) where the company is based *

Countries in which the company operates *

Company size *

- Micro (up to 10 workers, annual turnover under 2m. €€)
- Small / Medium (up to 50 workers, annual turnover under 10m. €€) Large (over 50 workers, annual turnover over 10m. €€)
- Large (over 50 workers, annual turnover over 10m. €€)

Working mode (before the pandemic) *

- Presential
- Remote
- Both

If you have selected “both”, indicate the respective proportion in this field.

Position held in the company *

- Manager of a multicultural team – Advance to next page
- Member of a multicultural team – Advance to page 85

Manager of a multicultural team

1. How many elements do you have in your team (excluding yourself)? *

If you have a coincident range of the number of elements, please considerer the first group (e.g.: if you have 10 elements on your team, you should reply 5-10 and not 10-15).

- 0 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 15
- 15 - 20
- Over 30

2. How many nationalities do you have in your team? *

3. Indicate the nationalities of your team members. *

4. Are you aware of the concept "Intercultural Management"? *

- Yes
- No

4.1. What does "Intercultural Management" mean for you?

4.2. Do you think you practice this kind of management? *

- Yes – Advance to question 4.3
- No – Advance to question 5
- I don't know – Advance to question 5

4.3. What kind of Intercultural Management practices do you / your company have? *

5. Is this the first time you are managing a multicultural team?

- Yes – Advance to question 5.1
- No – Advance to question 5.(1)

5.1. Did you receive training in Intercultural or Intercultural Management before taking over the management of the team? If you have received training in similar areas, select the option “Similar”.

- Yes
- No
- Similar

If you have selected the option “Similar”, indicate the area of similar training in this field. – Advance to question 6.

5.(1) Have you received training in Intercultural Management or Interculturality or similar areas in previous professional experiences? If you have received training in similar areas, select the option “Similar”. *

- Yes
- No
- Similar

If you have selected the option “Similar”, indicate the area of similar training in this field. – Advance to question 6

6. Have you ever experienced difficulties in managing your team for reasons directly related to cultural differences? *

- Yes
- No - Advance to question 7
- Maybe

6.1. What kind of difficulties did you experience? (e.g.: linguistic difficulties / attitude / discrepancy in values / group conflicts / discrimination / etc.) *

7. Does it seem relevant to you that managers of intercultural teams are aware of the cultural differences of their team members in order for the team to function properly? *

0 - Not relevant at all | 6 - Extremely relevant
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Do you believe that managers of intercultural teams being aware of cultural differences between members of multicultural teams impacts the team performance? *

*

0 - Doesn't impact at all | 6 - Impacts a lot

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. How relevant does it seem to you that members of intercultural teams are aware of the cultural differences between them for the team to work together properly? *

0 - Not relevant at all | 6 - Very relevant

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Do you believe that members of intercultural teams being aware of the cultural differences between them has an impact on the team's performance? *

0 - Doesn't impact at all | 6 - Impacts a lot

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Are you familiar with any type of Intercultural Management tool? *

Yes – Advance to question 11.(1)

No – Advance to question 11.1

I don't know – Advance to question 11.1

11.1. Would you like to familiarize yourself with this type of tools? *

Yes – Advance to question 12

No – Advance to question 11.(2)

Maybe – Advance to question 11.(2)

11.(1). What tools for raising awareness of Intercultural Management do you know? *

Cultural Dimensions of Hofstede Culture Onion Model

Iceberg Culture Model

Trompenaars' categories and dimensions of cultural diversity in business Components of cross-cultural competence

Culture assimilators

Other

If you selected the option “Other”, indicate which one(s) in this field.

11.2. Do you believe these tools are useful for better management and team performance? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Advance to question 12.

11.(2). Why wouldn't you like to become familiar with these types of tools? *

- It seems to be useless
- You don't believe that it has any significant impact on the management and performance of your team
- Your company would not bear the costs
- There is no time for "one more concern"
- Other reason(s)

If you selected the option "Other reason(s)", indicate which ones in this field.

12. Tick the option (s) that best reflect your opinion. Compared to teams formed by elements of a single culture, multicultural teams are: *

- More difficult to manage
- As difficult to manage
- Easier to manage
- Less innovative in problem-solving
- As innovative in problem solving More innovative in problem-solving
- Less conflicting
- As conflicting
- More conflicting
- An opportunity for the company
- A cost to the company

13. As manager of a multicultural team, do you seek to inform yourself about cultural differences between your team members and raise awareness of them? If you do, please explain how you do it, and if not, why you don't. *

You have reached the end of the questionnaire. Would you like to leave a comment?

Member of a multicultural team

1. How many elements do you have in your team (excluding yourself)? *

If you have a coincident range of the number of elements, please considerer the first group (e.g.: if you have 10 elements on your team, you should reply 5-10 and not 10-15).

- 0 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 15
- 15 - 20
- Over 30

2. How many nationalities do you have in your team? *

3. Indicate the nationalities of your team members. *

4. Are you aware of the concept "Intercultural Management"? *

- Yes
- No

4.1. What does "Intercultural Management" mean for you?

5. Have you ever received training in Intercultural Management or Interculturality?

If you have received training in similar areas, select the option "Similar". *

- Yes
- No
- Similar

If you have selected the option "Similar", indicate the area of similar training in this field.

6. Do you believe that this type of training or tools could be useful for a better performance of the multicultural team in which you are inserted and for a better knowledge and understanding of the cultural differences of the team members? *

0 - Absolutely useless | 6 - Very useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

7. As a member of a multicultural team, have you ever experienced difficulties or problems with other colleagues directly resulting from cultural differences? *

- Yes
- No – Advance to question 8

7.1. Please specify what kind of problems you have experienced (e.g.: discrimination / xenophobia / profound differences in mentality or values / etc.)

7.2. Does management step in / intervene in an attempt to resolve existing cultural differences? *

- Yes
- No – Advance to question 8

7.3. Please specify the way that management steps in / intervenes.

8. Do you believe that the problems arose of cultural differences between team members impact the team's performance? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. As a member of a multicultural team, do you know the culture and cultural differences of your colleague(s)? *

0 - I don't know them at all | 6 - I know them very well
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. What type of impact does the awareness of cultural differences between the teams' members has on the team's performance? *

0 - Very negative impact | 6 - Very positive impact
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. The team leader is concerned with the cultural differences of the team and handles them well, either by encouraging the cultural differences of the members as an engine of innovation, or by making them aware of them. *

0 - The team leader doesn't care at all | 6 - The team leader cares greatly

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Tick the option(s) that best reflect your opinion. Compared to teams formed by elements of a single culture, multicultural teams are: *

- Less stimulant to work
- As stimulant to work
- More stimulant to work
- Less innovative in problem-solving
- As innovative in problem-solving
- More innovative in problem-solving
- Less conflicting
- As conflicting
- More conflicting

You have reached the end of the questionnaire. Would you like to leave a comment?