



**B392 Bachelor Seminar**

**List of Topics**

**Summer Term 2024**

**1. The impact of national culture on job satisfaction**

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Job satisfaction can be described as the degree to which employees like their jobs. Having satisfied employees is of high relevance for a firm's success as a low job satisfaction can lead to firm exit, decreased loyalty, neglect of tasks and other less favorable outcomes.

Research suggests that job satisfaction differs across national cultures. However, it is not only the average job satisfaction levels that differ, but the drivers of job satisfaction might also be valued differently across nations. Every culture values different behaviors and role relationships that can influence the importance attached to different job characteristics.

Some drivers of job satisfaction can apply to all countries (e.g. having an interesting job), while others seem to be country-specific (e.g. the relative relevance of pay and job security).

This B.Sc. thesis should critically review the literature on job satisfaction and analyze in which way national culture impacts the drivers and the level of job satisfaction.

Hauff, S, Richter, NF & Tressin, T. 2015. Situational job characteristics and job satisfaction: The moderating role of national culture. *International Business Review*, 24(4), pp. 710–723.

Thomas, DC & Au, K. 2002. The Effect of Cultural Differences on Behavioral Responses to Low Job Satisfaction. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 33(2), pp. 309–326.

Huang, X & Vliert, EV de. 2004. Level and National Culture as Joint Roots of Job Satisfaction. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 53(3) pp. 329–348.



## 2. The difference between the Western and the Chinese leadership style

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Leadership contributes significantly to the success or failure of an organisation. The effects of leadership styles on employees' motivation and performance have been extensively studied.

Research has shown that the leadership styles considerably differ across cultures. In Western cultures, leadership attributes, such as empowerment and clear vision, are often seen as important elements of good leadership in order to increase employees' job satisfaction and commitment. On the contrary, in China, leadership tends to be based more on position, authority and seniority as a result of a more rigid hierarchical organisational and societal structure.

The B.Sc. thesis should juxtapose leadership styles in the West and China and critically discuss their advantages and disadvantages.

Javidan, M, Dorfman, P, De Luque, M, S, & House, R. 2006. In the eye of the beholder: Cross cultural lessons in leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20(1), 67-90.

Gerstner, C. R, & Day, D, D. 1994. Cross-cultural comparison of leadership prototypes. *Leadership Quarterly*, 5(1), 121-134.

Dorfman, P. W., Howel, J. P., Hibino, S., Lee, J. K., Tate, U. & Bautista, A. 1997. Leadership in western and Asian countries: Commonalities and differences in effective leadership processes across cultures. *Leadership Quarterly*, 8(3), 233-274.

Ma, L., Tsui, A.S., 2015. Traditional Chinese philosophies and contemporary leadership. *Leadership Quarterly* 26, 13–24.



### 3. Opportunities and challenges of self-initiated international assignments

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

There is a growing body of research that identifies a disjunction between an international assignees' perception of the value of international assignments from a career perspective and the perceived value from the organizational point of view. Specifically, individual assignees perceive the main value of the assignment as a mean for developing individual competence that can be transferred across organizations.

Reflecting this trend, international human resource managers have noticed a growing number of self-initiated international assignments. In the context of self-initiated assignments, employees seek posts in foreign operations and relocate abroad on their own accord, without organizational assistance. One key implication of the increasing number of self-initiated assignees is that multinational corporations can make use of these employees to fill key positions in subsidiary operations at a lower cost than traditional expatriates.

This B.Sc. thesis should critically review the advantages and drawbacks of self-initiated international assignments, both from the assignee's and the employer's point of view.

Suutari, V, Brewster, C, Mäkelä, L, Dickmann, M, & Tornikoski, C. 2018. The Effect of International Work Experience on the Career Success of Expatriates: A Comparison of Assigned and Self-Initiated Expatriates. *Human Resource Management*, 57(1), pp. 37-54.

Thomas, D.C., Lazarova, M.B. & Inkson, K. 2005. Global careers: new phenomenon or new perspectives? *Journal of World Business*, 40(4), pp. 340-347.

Shaffer, M. A., Reiche, S., Dimitrova, M, Lazarova, M, Chen, S, Westman, M & Wurtz, O 2016. Work- and family-role adjustment of different types of global professionals: Scale development and validation. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(2), pp. 113–139.

Hajro, A., Stahl, G., Clegg, C. & Lazarova, M.B. 2019. Acculturation, coping, and integration success of international skilled migrants: An integrative review and multilevel framework. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 29(3), pp. 328–352.



#### 4. Multicultural employees and boundary spanning

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Multicultural employees identify with two or more cultures. They possess an internalised cultural understanding of the respective cultures and consequently have a distinct set of features at their disposition that enables them to operate within and between cultures. Research links multicultural employees to higher social capital, intercultural skills and personal well-being to improve intercultural interactions.

In organizational settings, individual boundary spanners engage in and foster relations and interactions between groups. A boundary spanner is defined through the perception of the in-group and relevant out-groups regarding the engagement in significant interactions. The various possible activities of boundary spanning can be bundled into the functions of exchanging, linking, facilitating, and intervening. Particularly individuals with multicultural experience and language skills are identified as boundary spanners in multinational collaborations. Thus, multicultural employees may be pivotal in facilitating boundary spanning in multinational collaborations.

The B.Sc. Thesis should critically review and discuss the literature on multicultural employees, particularly regarding boundary spanning in multinational collaborations and discuss how multicultural employees can facilitate boundary spanning.

Backmann, J., Kanitz, R., Tian, A. W., Hoffmann, P., & Hoegl, M. (2020). Cultural gap bridging in multinational teams. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 51(8), 1283–1311.

Barner-Rasmussen, W., Ehrnrooth, M., Koveshnikov, A., & Mäkelä, K. (2014). Cultural and language skills as resources for boundary spanning within the MNC. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(7), 886–905.

Fitzsimmons, S. R., Liao, Y., & Thomas, D. C. (2016). From crossing cultures to straddling them: An empirical examination of outcomes for multicultural employees. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(1), 63–89.

Mäkelä, K., Barner-Rasmussen, W., Ehrnrooth, M., & Koveshnikov, A. (2019). Potential and recognized boundary spanners in multinational corporations. *Journal of World Business*, 54(4), 335–349.



## 5. Trust repair in cross-cultural collaborations

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Trust as a willingness to accept vulnerability is based on the positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of a counterpart. Given the fact, that expectations are shaped by cultural factors, particular challenges arise within cross-cultural collaborations.

In organizational settings, studies reveal that trust is a highly complex construct with a series of consequences. For instance, trust impacts organisational citizenship behaviours, commitment, job satisfaction and overall performance. However, trust is not static, it is fragile and can be broken or violated. Such violations can lead to retaliation, avoidance, or undesirable work behaviour, and even switch to distrust.

Therefore, trust repair is vital to prevent further damage, resulting in downward spirals, and to re-enable cooperation between the parties. Current research examines the dynamics and effectiveness of trust repair through different approaches on multiple levels. Nevertheless, overarching findings suggest that reasons and response to trust violations, dimensions of trustworthiness and related variables such as expectations and cultural differences affect trust repair efficiency.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically review the literature on trust repair and discuss in particular the impact of culture on trust repair.

Kähkönen, T., Blomqvist, K., Gillespie, N., & Vanhala, M. (2021). Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research and future research directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 130, 98–109.

Kim, P. H., Dirks, K. T., & Cooper, C. D. (2009). The Repair of Trust: A Dynamic Bilateral Perspective and Multilevel Conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review*, 34(3), 401–422.

Zaheer, S., & Zaheer, A. (2005). Trust across borders. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(1), 21–29.



## 6. Determinants of power in multinational teams

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Although teamwork is generally seen as a more egalitarian management context compared to traditional hierarchies, teams are still typically characterized by power differences between individual team members. Power is defined as the employee's control over socially valued resources.

Team members can derive power from a range of different sources. Scholars have named expertise, charisma and legitimate authority as possible sources of power differentials in teams. Whereas these factors can be relevant in any team, the power dynamics in multinational teams, i.e. teams composed of members with different national and cultural backgrounds, may also be affected by proximity to headquarters, language proficiency, power distance orientation or other aspects.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically review possible determinants of power differentials in multinational teams and formulate recommendations for multinational team management.

Greer, L. L. 2014. Power in teams: effects of team power structures on team conflict and team outcomes. In: Handbook of Research in Conflict Management. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Edgar Publishing., pp. 93-108

Pantelli, N. & Tucker, R. 2009. Power and trust in global virtual teams. Communications of the ACM, 52(12), pp. 113-115.

Levy, O. & Reiche, B.S. 2018. The politics of cultural capital: Social hierarchy and organizational architecture in the multinational corporation. Human Relations, 71(6), pp. 867-894



## 7. Building team identity across national cultural boundaries

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Over the last decade many multinational companies have globally integrated their operations. This has led to a growing importance of multinational teams, which are expected to generate innovative solutions, integrate knowledge and implement complex business strategies. These important and complex tasks can only be fulfilled if team members work closely together. To ensure the necessary trustful cooperation, a shared sense of team identity has to be developed. However, this is difficult to achieve in multinational teams, since identifications with national subgroups compete with the team identification. Leaders of multinational teams therefore need to make specific efforts to prevent subgroup formation and strengthen team identity.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically review the challenges for the formation of a shared identity in multinational teams, considering in particular social identity and social categorization theories. On this basis, recommendations for team building measures should be developed.

Gundlach, M., Zivnuska, S. & Stoner, J. 2006. Understanding the relationship between individualism-collectivism and team performance through an integration of social identity theory and the social relations model. *Human Relations*, 59(12), pp. 1603-1632.

Gardner, J., Paulsen, N., Gallois, C., Callan, V. & Monaghan, P. 2001. Communication in organizations: An intergroup perspective. In Robinson, W.P. & Giles, H. (Eds), *The New Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*. Wiley, pp. 561-583.

Salk, J.E., & Brannen, M.Y. 2000. National culture, networks, and individual influence in a multinational management team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(2), pp. 191-202.



## 8. The challenges of effective virtual team leadership

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Virtual teams are geographically dispersed, requiring their members to collaborate through electronic means with minimal face-to-face interaction. Often, virtual teams consist of cross-functional members, working on highly interdependent tasks and sharing responsibility for team outcomes. However, the unique characteristics of virtual teams make the sharing of knowledge among the geographically separated members difficult. Individuals face additional challenges when interacting in virtual teams, such as lack of trust, group cohesion, satisfaction, and increased potential for conflict.

Virtual teams present unique leadership challenges as the leader is confronted with the challenge of geographic dispersion. Organizations need to select leaders who can articulate a vision that guide team members and motivate them.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically discuss whether and how traditional leadership styles have to be adapted for effective leadership in global virtual teams.

Hambley, L. A., O'Neill, T. A. & Leine, T. J. B., 2007. Virtual team leadership: The effects of leadership style and communication medium on team interaction styles and outcomes. *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 103 (1), pp. 1-20.

Kahai, S. S., Sosik, J. J. & Avolio, B. J., 2003. Effects of leadership style, anonymity and rewards on creativity- relevant processes and outcomes in an electronic meeting system context. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14 (4/5), pp. 499-524.

Muethel, M. & Hoegl, M., 2010. Cultural and societal influences on shared leadership in globally dispersed teams. *Journal of International Management*, 16 (3), pp. 234-246.





## 9. “Generation Z” employees in multinational corporations

*Supervisor: Dr. Cristina Popescu*

Research on generational differences has been a popular topic in academic literature for many decades. Given the Generation Z cohort entering increasingly the labour market, the issue of how Generation Z conduct themselves in a business environment has become increasingly important.

Generation Z individuals are described as achievement-oriented, highly educated and ethnically and racially highly diverse. It is said that they place a great emphasis on mental well-being and ethical behaviour.

Recruiting and retaining Generation Z employees can be seen as a crucial task for multinational corporations, as this generation is starting to change the global labour markets.

This B.Sc. dissertation should critically discuss the existing academic literature on Generation Z and analyse in which way employees of this generation present opportunities or challenges for multinational corporations.

Schroth, H. (2019) ‘Are You Ready for Gen Z in the Workplace?’, *California Management Review*, 61(3), pp. 5–18.

Desai, S. P. and Lele, V. (2017) ‘Correlating Internet, Social Networks and Workplace - a Case of Generation Z Students’, *Journal of Commerce & Management Thought*, 8(4), pp. 802–815

Nair, A. and Sadasivan, R. (2019) ‘Winning the Talent Game: HR Gamification Experience for Generation Z’, *International Journal on Leadership*, 7(1), pp. 44–49.



## 10. Host country effects on the HRM practices of MNC subsidiaries

*Supervisor: Shuangyue Li*

A host country environment is distinctive from the home country environment in terms of socio-economic factors (e.g. labor market conditions), institutional conditions (e.g. laws, formal and informal rules set by employers), and culture (e.g. values and norms). These factors differ from country to country and can constrain the capability of a MNC to standardize the HRM practices across its subsidiaries. As a result, a deep understanding of the variety of the host country environments is necessary for deciding upon the standardization-localization mix of HRM practices a MNC has to apply for its subsidiaries.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically review how the host country environment can influence the HRM practices of subsidiaries.

Anxo, D., Fagan, C., Cebrian, I., & Moreno, G. 2007. Patterns of labor market integration in Europe—a life course perspective on time policies. *Socio-Economic Review*, 5(2), pp. 233-260.

Björkman, I., & Lervik, J. E. 2007. Transferring HR practices within multinational corporations. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 17(4), pp. 320-335.

Ferner, A., Quintanilla, J., & Varul, M. Z. 2001. Country-of-origin effects, host-country effects, and the management of HR in multinationals: German companies in Britain and Spain. *Journal of World Business*, 36(2), pp. 107-127.



## 11. Managing knowledge in multinational companies through expatriates

*Supervisor: Shuangyue Li*

In an organizational context, knowledge management has the task to actively develop and transfer knowledge through certain structures, processes and systems. The goal is to keep, develop and spread the knowledge acquired in order to achieve innovation and higher performance. Multinational corporations (MNCs) are particularly faced with challenges that arise when knowledge has to be managed between headquarter (HQ) and subsidiaries. Geographically dispersed locations and culturally diverse members of the MNC require more complex solutions to transfer and develop knowledge.

Researchers have found out that expatriates can play an important role in the knowledge management of MNCs. In order to transfer knowledge from HQ to subsidiaries and back, expatriates with special functional knowledge can play an important role by taking key positions in subsidiaries for a certain period of time. But what are the success factors, challenges and limitations of this method of knowledge transfer? And which contextual factors influence the success, challenges and limitations of knowledge management through expatriates?

The B.Sc. thesis should critically review the literature on knowledge management in MNCs. On this basis, the role of expatriates in knowledge management should be discussed.

Duvivier, F; Peeters, C & Harzing, A-W. 2019. Not all international assignments are created equal: HQ- subsidiary knowledge transfer patterns across types of assignments and types of knowledge. *Journal of World Business*, 54(3), pp. 181–190

Hajro, A.; Pudenko, M. 2007. Multinational teams in the context of organizational culture: A multi-company case study. *Best Paper Proceedings, Academy of Management Annual Meeting*.

Zellmer-Bruhn, M.; Gibson, C. 2006. Multinational organization context: Implications for team learning and performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3), pp. 501-518.

Fang, Y., Jiang, G., Makino, S., Beamish, P. 2010. Multinational firm knowledge, use of expatriates, and foreign subsidiary performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(1), pp. 27-54.



## 12. Cross-cultural training and development of expatriates

*Supervisor: Shuangyue LI*

In an effort to attain and sustain global competitiveness, organizations are increasingly focused on developing the necessary skills for success in the international marketplace. Expatriation can help MNCs manage the complexity of international business and provides the possibility to control and coordinate subsidiaries. Additionally, Expatriation is a tool used in staffing, as e.g. different subsidiaries face a shortage of skilled employees or in order to develop a pool of experienced international talent.

However, lack of proper adjustment of an expatriate can result in poor work performance with associated issues of major disadvantages for both, the company and the expatriate. Therefore, there has been a growing trend within multinational corporations to provide cross-cultural management training for their expatriates, in order to increase the effectiveness of their employees working and living outside of their own cultures.

Cross-cultural training facilitates the expatriate's cross-cultural adjustment in the host country and, hence, minimizes problems of adjustment. Cross-cultural training helps to develop a more cosmopolitan outlook and gives managers a deeper understanding and appreciation of cross-cultural situations. It also can help employees to learn about the host culture, its values and norms, as well as appropriate and acceptable behaviors in the society and how that affects their performance in host organizations. Furthermore, it helps develop coping mechanisms to deal with new and unforeseen or unpredictable events in the host culture and to reduce conflict arising from new unexpected and unfamiliar encounters.

The B.Sc. thesis should critically discuss how cross-cultural training and development can help improve the expatriates' adjustment process.

Bennett, R., Aston, A., & Colquhoun, T. 2000. Cross-cultural training: A critical step in ensuring the success of international assignments. *Human Resource Management*, 39(2-3), pp. 239-250.

Puck, J, Kittler, M, & Wright, C. 2008. Does it really work? Re-assessing the impact of pre-departure cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment. *International Journal Of Human Resource Management*, 19(12), pp. 2182-2197

Forster, N. 2000. Expatriates and the impact of cross-cultural training. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10(3), pp. 63-78.